

CHEMIST & DRUGGIST

The newsworthy for pharmacy

a Benn publication

January 2 1982

The rise and
fall of the
swagman

NPA vets new
Revlon deal
for chemists

David Sharpe
tests blood
pressure test

Review panel
calls in the
parties on
property costs

The Simple Sensitive Skin Care Range



- ★ New for 1982—Simple Hand & Body Lotion
- ★ All-year-round advertising in national press, women's & T.V. magazines.
- ★ Heavyweight T.V. campaign (London area).

Simple Soap Limited,
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The truth about the suntan market.

You may have read conflicting information about the suntan market. You ought to know the facts from independent research sources. (1981) (AC Nielsen and TCPI).

1. Retail sales of suntan products in the UK are big: **£17** million over five months.

2. Ambre Solaire takes one third of all consumer purchases which means it outsells its nearest competitor by almost **3:1**.

3. Ambre Solaire's end-of-season stock is the lowest in relation to sales. By dividing stock by sales we have the following month's supply:-

AMBRE SOLAIRE	2.4 month's supply
Nivea	2.4 month's supply
Bergasol	3.5 month's supply
Hawaiian Tropic	5.2 month's supply
Coppertone	5.4 month's supply

CONCLUSION: Make the best of your space and your investment by supporting the brand leader. Ask your Ambre Solaire representative for details of the Ambre Solaire Service Scheme to the Chemist before committing yourself for the 1982 season.

**Ambre Solaire. The NO RISK – MORE PROFIT brand...
because you only make profit on what you sell.**

CHEMIST & DRUGGIST

Incorporating Retail Chemist

January 2 1982

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COMMENT

Franchised swag

"The era of monopolistic specialisation is ending." That conclusion comes towards the end of an article on the "swag" trade in this week's issue (p14) and concerns, in particular, the agency cosmetics and fragrance business. It is not crystal ball gazing by a commentator (usually the most prolific of prophets) but a rational judgment by someone who has only very recently left the trade himself, believing that it has reached a watershed.

We commend the article to all our retail subscribers, whether they have been exploiters of the swag opportunities — or the agents of the franchise houses who have complained bitterly to their principals and trade organisations about the appearance of the profit-earners of almost every range in non-franchised outlets. *C&D* certainly receives a regular flow of correspondence on the subject — often with allegations of manufacturer involvement that we cannot publish without substantiation, and which are impossible to substantiate.

The article by Canopus shows quite clearly that some manufacturers *have* been involved — reluctantly at first, perhaps, but in a proportion of cases actually liking the experience of joining the "mass" market so much that they have formed special departments to encourage the trade. Canopus takes us through the story in chronological and logical sequence, explaining why the various steps have been inevitable and usually beyond the manufacturers' control. That being so, it is a pity that none have really come out into the open and allowed their agents to know the rules of the new game in which they are competing.

This point is well made in the latest report of the NPA Board (p4) which claims that cash-and-carry wholesalers Makro are listing many famous perfume agency names. But take note of the

manufacturers' response to the NPA's representations — "all would be taking further action to investigate the matter." Frankly, that is not good enough.

The companies already know perfectly well what is going on, and from the agent's point of view it does not matter whether the stock is getting into general distribution by parallel importing, by agents' over-ordering to make "a bit on the side" — or through the manufacturer's own back door. What matters is that the agency house should acknowledge the changing marketplace and take steps to adjust pricing policies, stock-holding requirements and distribution arrangements to support their full-line stockists.

For one thing, there should be a clear statement of policy concerning the future of the agency concept and of how the house sees its future in a market in which the "monopolistic specialist" has ceased to exist. NPA has just approved a new draft dealer agreement for Revlon stockists — a company which has had more than its share of trouble and accusation in connection with "escaped" products — and it will be interesting to see whether that agreement makes any concession to the new situation.

To end on a more hopeful note, let us draw attention to Canopus' own conclusion that the chemist can survive the competition just as he has the change in toiletries distribution. But it takes a new attitude of mind — perhaps more on the part of the manufacturer than of the pharmacist. The one thing we hope the franchise houses will learn from the experience of the mass market producers is not to allow the muscle of the retailing giants to dictate the price. They have names and reputations to sell (and protect) — if they succumb they will die and the agency concept with them. ■

NPA vets Revlon chemist deal

Revlon have revised their dealer agreement in response to pressure from the Board of the National Pharmaceutical Association and in order that the UK version would be compatible with Revlon's European agreement.

The revised draft was vetted at the November Board meeting of the NPA and spells out Revlon's obligations first — these had been left out of the original one. They now undertake to "support the dealer by promptly answering his queries, whether technical or administrative, and by maintaining an efficient accounting and physical distribution system."

□ The initial agreement, drawn up by Revlon's European vice president (legal) and their British lawyer, had already been lodged with the European Commission. David Sharpe, who is both a member of the NPA Board and acts as independent consultant to Revlon, told *C&D*: "Revlon have bent over backwards to help the chemist in having the agreement redrafted so that it is applicable in the UK." The new agreement will now be laid before the Commission.

Other matters discussed at the NPA Board meeting were:

Transfer of employment

A reply from the Under Secretary for Employment had been received in response to a letter from the NPA director expressing concern about the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. These Regulations, which comply with an EEC directive, are at present in draft before Parliament. They specify that a purchaser of a business must accept some or all of the employees in that business or otherwise risk a claim for unfair dismissal.

The Under Secretary's reply said that although, under the Regulations, contracts of employment would be automatically transferred it would still be possible for the new owner to dismiss employees due to redundancy or other reasons although he would then be liable for any redundancy payments. There was nothing to prevent the new owner arranging with the transferor to make certain employees redundant before the transfer.

■ *Hills Pharmaceuticals*. Mr Astill had written to the managing director of the company congratulating him on an

advertisement for their bronchial balsam which had stressed the pharmacist's role, and thanking him, on behalf of NPA members, for giving proper prominence to the role of the pharmacist in distributing medicines.

■ *Training groups*. These would be established in Norfolk, Cornwall, the Midlands and in Scotland. Mr J. Hendra had reported that no further progress would be made with the Cornwall project until after Christmas; meetings in Leeds and Manchester were already arranged.

■ *Controlled Drugs security*. It was decided that Mr Astill would represent the NPA on the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs Working Group, which is to review the requirements for the security of Controlled drugs.

■ *Seminar dates for 1982*. Computer — January 13, April 14 and 15; Security — January 27; Babycare products — February 16; Tax planning — February 18, May 13; Truss fitting — March 11; Photographic — March 30; Hair care — April 20. Seminars on homoeopathy, pet care, health foods and, possibly, display and merchandising were being organised.

■ *Sponsorship by pharmaceutical companies*. Following the visit to Mallinson House of the managing director of Merrell Pharmaceuticals, Mr Astill said he believed that a number of companies wished to make financial contributions towards training aids. The Board accepted the principle of sponsorship in the distribution of training materials and aids.

■ *DITB — new representative*. Mr J. Wilford introduced Mr Coates of the DITB, who had replaced Mr T. Parkinson. The position of the NPA grant after March 1983 was not yet clear. Mr Coates explained that discussions with the industry were planned to develop effective voluntary agreements.

■ *Medicines inquiries card*. The wording for a counter card was agreed as follows: "Before you leave — Please be sure you understand the directions on your medicine."

■ *Perfumes*. The Board was informed that the price list circulated by Makro, cash and carry wholesalers, included many famous agency names. These companies were contacted by NPA and the replies received indicated that some were already aware of the problems and all would be taking further action to investigate the matter.

■ *Tinaderm — GSL*. In reply to Mr

Astill's letter, the managing director of Kirby-Warrick Pharmaceuticals had assured the NPA that all their ethical products, including Tinaderm would continue to be distributed through registered pharmacies.

■ *Price marking — bargain offers*. The conclusions and recommendations of the recent review of current bargain offer legislation by the Director General of Fair Trading were discussed. It was decided that the NPA should write to the Minister for Consumer Affairs stressing the need to retain recommended prices. A comment on the practice of some mail order firms of quoting low prices for goods and high packing and postage charges should also be included. ■

Opticians' monopoly to be reviewed

The current restrictions limiting sales of spectacles to opticians are to be reviewed by the Director General of Fair Trading.

Recently there has been much public debate over the high cost of spectacles and whether they should be available through non-optical outlets. Mrs Sally Oppenheim, Minister for Consumer Affairs, has now asked the Director General to look at the parts of the 1958 Opticians Act which restrict competition of sales. These are the statutory monopoly on selling optical appliances enjoyed by opticians and medical practitioners and the power given to the General Optical Council to regulate advertising and other forms of publicity.

Mrs Oppenheim said the Government had welcomed the recent change in the Optical Council's rules which permitted prices to be displayed in opticians windows but it was not yet clear what the effects of this change would be. The Director General had not been asked to decide whether the Act should be revised, she said, but his review would help the Government to consider whether any revision was needed.

The Federation of Optical Corporate Bodies recently commissioned Taylor Nelson to survey just over 1,000 spectacle wearers. They found that 98 per cent rejected the idea of buying spectacles without any professional advice or without having an eye test. Opticians were rated third out of eight groups in terms of professional status, coming just behind doctors and dentists and above solicitors. (Pharmacists came fifth, beating vets, teachers and accountants). ■

Review panel calls talks on 'property'

Representatives of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and the Department of Health have been invited to meet the pharmacy review panel and contribute oral evidence on the question of property costs.

The date has yet to be confirmed but is expected to be towards the end of February or beginning of March.

The panel first met on December 9 to consider property costs and since then has requested more written evidence from both parties to clarify their earlier submissions.

It is just possible that at the Spring meeting, the issue of profit may be considered — the Department had wanted this to be first on the agenda but they have yet to make their submission of evidence to the PSNC (PSNC then has six weeks to respond and lay its evidence before the panel). ■

Methadone cost

Many wholesalers are charging prices for methadone hydrochloride BP well in excess of the Drug Tariff price, according to a statement released by the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee.

Methadone hydrochloride is included within Part VA of the Drug Tariff and is priced at £1.47 per 1g. This price is based on the current list of Macarths Ltd.

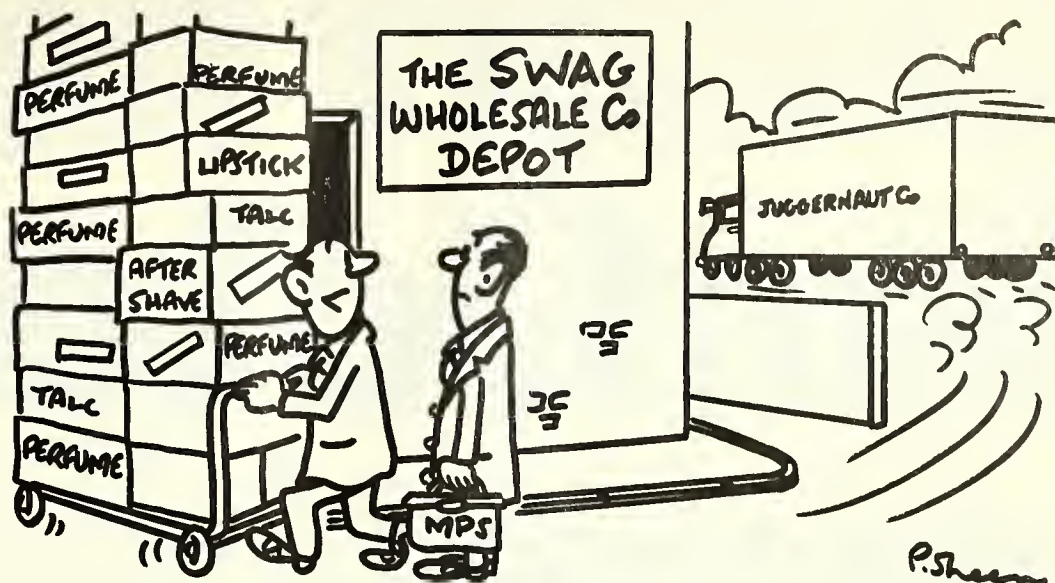
However, the major wholesalers do not stock the Macarths product, but supply methadone from the Wellcome Foundation Ltd. Wellcome are charging £20 per 5g. *C&D* understand the price was increased from £3.44 per 5g to the present level at the end of September, 1981.

A Macarths spokesman told *C&D* that the company steers its own course on pricing, and considers its price of £1.47 per g correct. It was conceded that there might be a small increase of around 10 per cent on the next batch produced. ■

Commons statement on 'sterile' dressings

Contaminated sterile dressings may have been coming into the country for more than a year, Dr Gerard Vaughan said in the Commons recently, following a Press release from the DHSS warning that some imported sterile dressings have been found to be contaminated with bacteria (*C&D* 19/26 December, p1136).

Similar dressings imported into Australia two months ago were found to be infected and their High Commission



"It fell off the back of a lorry — some lorry!"

had issued a Press notice to this effect in September. Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody, Opposition spokesman on health, said she was horrified that there appeared to be no safeguards against the importation of contaminated medical dressings, and asked why the Department had not acted sooner.

Dr Vaughan said it would have been wrong to alarm the general public unless it had been shown that the articles were contaminated. As soon as it was known that there was a serious likelihood of contamination a Press release was issued.

It is known that the dressings are contaminated with a variety of bacteria, although the type has not been identified. A spokesman for the Department of Health said the results are expected shortly after Christmas.

Dr Vaughan said the risk of using the contaminated dressings was small but real. ■

Proposed poisons law changes

Cosmetic products should be added to the list of articles enjoying a general exemption from the poisons law, the Poisons Board is recommending.

Under further proposed changes to the Poisons Act 1972 and the associated Poisons List and Rules, issued by the Home Office, the following definition of a cosmetic product would be included in Rule 2: "Cosmetic product has the same meaning as in the Cosmetics Products Regulations 1978." The general exemption would mean deletion of current and proposed exemptions in group II of Schedule 3 for nitrobenzene, oxalic acid, phenols and phenylmercuric salts.

Other revised and additional changes to the proposals circulated last year (*C&D* August 29, p325) affect fenaminosulf, fenazaflor, sulfotep and thionazin (deletion from List and Schedules); dialifos, dinoterb, quinalphos and thiofanox (added to Part II and

Schedules); exemption for granular preparations (Schedule 3 group II) to be reconsidered; lead acetates, methomyl, nicotine (entries on Schedule 3 group II); the list of products cleared under the Pesticides Safety Precautions Scheme, to which poisons law packaging and labelling provisions will not apply, has been amended.

The Secretary of State hopes to make a new List and Rules in the Spring, incorporating the changes. Further details are available to interested parties from Room 109, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT, where objections and observations should also be addressed by January 18. ■

Severe side effect from Fabahistin

The Committee on Safety of Medicines has warned that the antihistamine mebhydrolin may, in rare cases, cause white cell depression.

In the latest issue of *Current Problems* the CSM says that in the past 17 years it has received nine reports of granulocytopenia or agranulocytosis developing in patients taking mebhydrolin. The Committee has concluded that in eight of these cases the drug was probably responsible and that in this respect it differs from other antihistamines. All the patients recovered on stopping the drug. The Committee notes that similar cases have been reported in Australia and Japan.

Mebhydrolin is the active ingredient in Fabahistin tablets and suspension and the CSM says the data sheet is being amended to include this rare adverse reaction. Fabahistin is a pharmacy-only medicine. ■

Dead heat in for October



Presentation of the October Kodak Award for Quality to Napcolour Ltd., Liskeard.
L to R: Ken Webb, Technical Services Manager, Napcolour Liskeard; Andrew Green, Laboratory Manager, Napcolour Liskeard; John Vose, Technical Sales Representative, Kodak Limited; Jeremy Greenaway, Reporter and Presenter, Westward Television, presenting the Award; Colin Armstrong, Production Manager, Napcolour Liskeard; Denis Kelly, Area Sales Manager, Kodak Limited.



Trevor Baker of Southern Television presenting the October Kodak Award for Quality to B. Alan Freegard Ltd., Poole.
L to R: John Vose, Technical Sales Representative, Kodak Limited; Alan Freegard of B. Alan Freegard Ltd; Trevor Baker of Southern Television, presenting the Award; Ron Freegard of B. Alan Freegard Ltd; Denis Kelly, Area Sales Manager, Kodak Limited.

South West Kodak Award.

There was clearly a quiet revolution going on in the South West of the country during October, for two photofinishers in the area, B. Alan Freegard of Poole in Dorset and the Liskeard laboratory of Napcolour Limited have tied for first place in the Kodak Award for Quality. Ron Freegard and his brother Alan run the family business, which was founded by their father B. Alan Freegard, half a century ago.

Although they have figured in the last four monthly "Top Ten" charts, Ron confessed that they had always rather suspected that the company was too small to achieve the top place. They run the laboratory with a staff of fourteen and the bulk of their work comes from an area 15-20 miles around Bournemouth.

The brothers believe in offering a really personal quality service for both amateurs and professional photographers, and between them they check all the work leaving the laboratory. The October award was presented to the laboratory recently by Trevor Baker of Southern Television.

The Liskeard laboratory of Napcolour Limited has been a member of the large photo processing group for the past six years and has been well-known in the area for more than 30 years.

Laboratory Manager Andrew Green was on holiday when he heard the good news and quite naturally he and all the

staff were delighted, particularly as this is the first year that the laboratory has entered the contest. Mr Green is convinced that this is the first time a plant in the "Deep West" has won one of the awards.

He says that business is brisk for the time of year and is well ahead of the same time last year. The laboratory serves a wide area throughout Devon and Cornwall and most of Somerset.

The October award was presented to the laboratory by Jeremy Greenaway of Westward Television.

The other laboratories in the "Top Ten" for October were:

R. H. Williams, Haverfordwest.

Napcolour Limited, Ormskirk.

Abbeycolor, Shrewsbury.

Grunwick Processing Labs Ltd. London.

Belmont Photo Works Limited, Belfast.

Munns Brothers Limited, Birmingham.

Scottish Colorfoto Limited, Alexandria.

T. Cooper (Harrow) Limited.

Napcolour Limited, Chester.

The Kodak Award for Quality

The competition is open to all independent photofinishers who use Kodak 'Ektacolor' Paper and formulated chemicals. Kodak and its subsidiary companies are excluded.

All photofinishers who regularly and continuously return full sets of quality monitoring strips to the Kodak Finisher Monitoring Service are automatically included in the scheme, which runs from April to December, 1981.

Smile. It's on 'Kodak' paper.



David Sharpe looks at potential for blood pressure testing

Always keen to try new ideas, Mr David Sharpe has recently installed an electronic blood pressure testing machine in his North London pharmacy.

Customers insert £0.50 to have their blood pressure taken automatically, under the supervision of a pharmacist or pre-registration graduate who interprets the results and refers people to their doctors if necessary.

Mr Sharpe, who is chairman of the PSNC and a member of the Pharmaceutical Society's Council, is keeping records of the numbers using the machine — a Telkoor AES model MP 2000 — to determine whether, at a cost of £1,800 to £2,000, it is an economic proposition for retail pharmacies. If so, the machines may become available through the National Pharmaceutical Association. Meanwhile, Mr Sharpe is importing them from Israel through his hospital equipment business, Cory Brothers.

Simple to use

The machine is so simple to use it needs no supervision, but Mr Sharpe insists that help is given in explaining the blood pressure readings. The user sits in a comfortable position in front of the machine and relaxes for a few minutes so that the resting blood pressure is obtained. He bares his left arm and places it through the open cuff with his palm upright. With his free hand he inserts £0.50 and presses the start button.

Air is pumped automatically into the cuff making it constrict round the inserted upper arm until the flow of blood through the brachial artery stops. The user is asked to sit still, without talking, for half a minute while the cuff deflates. As the blood flow resumes it produces thudding sounds which are converted by sensors into electronic data representing systolic pressure. The sounds continue until the blood flow is no longer restricted, and the blood pressure at the last substantial sound is recorded as the diastolic pressure. During this time the heart rate is also computed.

When the test is complete the systolic and diastolic pressures and pulse rate are displayed on the screen and recorded on a printout for the customer to keep. The printout also advises: "Your blood pressure can vary up or down depending on physical condition, time of day, psychological state, etc. Check regularly."

Preregistration graduate Roland Bogush reads his blood pressure measurement from the screen while locum pharmacist Mrs Jean Sheil collects the printout

If the user is not sufficiently relaxed, the printout reads: "Reliable result not achieved. You may try again after relaxing five minutes. Thank you." Another message appears if the person's arm is too thin for a reliable reading.

The coin attachment is optional, but Mr Sharpe believes few pharmacists will be so philanthropic as to invest some £2,000 with no financial return. Charging £0.50 also acts as a useful barrier to those people who might want to sit and play with the machine all day. It will, for example, tell a roll of cotton wool to relax for five minutes because a reliable result was not achieved!

Almost 50 people used the machine in the first month after its installation on November 5. Obviously at first it was used by customers who had come into the pharmacy for other reasons, but as the word spreads people come in specially to have their blood pressure taken, particularly businessmen who drop in after work in the evenings.

A few are a bit suspicious, wondering if they are going to make fools of themselves in public, but Mr Sharpe thinks that if the machine was moved from its present position just outside the dispensary to somewhere more private it might not get used at all.

About 80% of users have been under 40 years old. All are asked if they are taking any medicines, particularly for high blood pressure. Anyone with a high diastolic pressure — around 90-95mm Hg — is invited to come back a week later for a free test. If the reading is still high they are advised to see a doctor in a manner that encourages them to go without making them panic. About eight patients have been referred. Some were already receiving antihypertensive therapy and had just come for a check, but two untreated cases of dangerously high diastolic pressures were identified.

Mr Sharpe does not feel entitled to follow up hypertensive patients: "We give them the information and it's up to them to decide what to do with it," he says.

None of the local doctors disapproves



— no worries here that their diagnostic roles are being usurped. Some are even grateful for the time it is saving them. The only criticism came from a cardiac technician who was worried about such a machine being used by untrained people but the staff soon persuaded him they were capable of operating it correctly.

The machine is checked regularly against a mercury sphygmomanometer and stethoscope. If it goes wrong, engineers are available to offer their services in England, Wales and Scotland. The same model is used widely in the US and in West Germany. Mr Sharpe is also considering the possibility of leasing the machines and further information may be obtained from him at Cory Brothers, 4 Dollis Park, London N3 (01-349 1081). ■

Poll 'thumbs down' for NHS proposals

The majority of people are satisfied with the treatment provided by the NHS, and feel it represents value for money, according to a Marplan poll carried out for, and published by *The Guardian* recently. Satisfaction with the NHS was highest among the oldest age group. But 64 per cent of the sample felt the services offered under the NHS are in need of a change.

Of the sample, 71 per cent thought that the NHS represented value for money for the tax payer, and 58 per cent felt the treatment provided by general medical practitioners was very good. The hospital service was rated as very good by 67 per cent.

The Guardian suggest that this shows the "thumbs down" on Government proposals for alternative financing of the Health Service with an emphasis on insurance based schemes. 87 per cent thought that making the service a private one was a bad idea. However, 47 per cent feel employers or trade unions should offer improved health care as a "perk" — 41 per cent opposed the idea. Only 33 per cent thought that patients should be charged for "hotel" services. ■

Ministerial look at Sunday trading

The review of Sunday trading, begun by the Home Office in June 1980, has now been completed and is before ministers for consideration. A Commons statement is expected to be made in the New Year.

This latest attempt to change the Sunday trading laws comes from the House of Lords. A proposal by Lady Trumpington to abolish all restrictions on shop opening hours has received its first formal reading, although no date is planned for the second reading.

Should the bill be accepted by the Lords and complete the committee and report stages it will then be presented to the Commons. ■

By Xrayser

Professor P.F. D'Arcy, OBE, head of the department of pharmacy, Queen's University of Belfast, has been elected a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. The president said at last month's Council meeting that Professor D'Arcy's contribution to Northern Ireland pharmacy had been outstanding. Without his co-operation the post-qualification education and training courses would never have attained their present popularity. In addition to his work on the Council of the Society he was a member of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, chairman of the NI staff council for the health and personal social services, a member of the Medicines Commission, vice-president of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, and a director of Northern Pharmacies Ltd.



Miss Lesley Wallace, MPSNI, is presented with the tickets for a seven day holiday for two in the Canary Islands by Mr D.H. Coffey, MPSNI, president of the Ulster Chemists Association, while Mr Frank Knox, director and general manager of William C. Knox & Son looks on. Miss Wallace won this star prize in a flash-bulb sales competition run by William C. Knox & Son



■ **Miss Carolyn Clark, BSc (Pharm), MPS**, has been appointed by Vichy (UK) Ltd as full time company pharmacist to assist their head pharmacist, Diane Miles, in training chemist assistants in skincare.

Other duties will include training members of the sales force, answering customer and consumer queries and producing technical documentation. Miss Clark has spent five years working in retail pharmacy, including management experience.

Mr Les Miles, MPS, of Latewards Ltd, Ashton Old Road, Manchester, has won one of 15 silver awards presented by the city's Community Health Councils during their recent "Thank U month."

No Medium

No more crystal ball gazing or predictions for me! Do you remember I was rash enough to suggest that although my figures for November were not good, I thought we would have a reasonable December, after which Heaven help us? It seems that Heaven decided to get in early, with freezing fogs, gales and blizzards, and a bundle of heavy snow to cushion the blow. As the minister said when he breezed in and stood gasping at the counter waiting to collect a prescription for a household parishioner: "I suppose its seasonal, but it seems a wee bit wilful to give us so much, so soon!"

But whether it was the weather or the recession, my cash takings for the first week of December are 20 per cent below those of the same week last year — and that's not making allowance for inflation. A sick feeling as I look at the shelves full of unsold stock. Still, we are better off than some poor folk who are reported as having no electricity for the past five days.

Just to complete my happiness I knocked my typewriter off my desk at home, and as it is (or was) a heavy duty model it did not bounce, so will need expert repair.

Electronic toys

From watching the complex antics (and subsequent muck-ups) of some of the local pharmacists who have gone in for computers in a big way, I have formed the opinion that so long as you are keen and have time and money to burn it's an ideal hobby, exerting a good moral, influence by leaving no time for other distractions such as women, booze and gambling. But as a positive labour-saving tool for the busy smaller pharmacy it would seem to demand too much feeding to be worth the effort.

But as the accident to my typewriter, and my need to use it weekly for a thousand or so words, has made me wonder if I might after all, be able to justify the expense of a word processor — the more so, since I read in one of the Sunday supplements that there is a company trading in second-hand ones. The idea of typing copy onto a TV screen, correcting, editing and revising, then pressing a button for as many perfect copies as I want, is singularly attractive.

The cost of a new IBM golf-ball typewriter with a 1,000-word memory is about £1,500. From inquiries it appears that for that sort of money you can buy a proper little floppy disc computer with printer bringing the added bonus of being

able to provide utter chaos in its application to such simple tasks as payroll calculations, stock control, prices. All you have to do, said the salesman, "is to learn either the BASIC program system to do your own programming or buy a ready made one in hundreds of easy-to-use variations."

As I backed gently out of the showroom I remembered only too well the almost identical words I use when selling some complex and desirable piece of photographic equipment. I think I'll wait a while until I know exactly what I need as opposed to what I fancy before I indulge myself.

Dewey eyed

You will be pleased to learn that soon we are to be offered a relaunch of Eye Dew, now in two variations, for blue eyes and clear eyes (with a potential for further development later to brown and hazel?). It is said the margin is better and the product will be pharmacy only. All Oprex have to do now to secure my support is to reprice all their products to give a standard margin, withdraw Pharmacin, and maybe relaunch it with a name less objectionable to pharmacists.

Bulk prescribing

It is good that the Health Visitors Association is backing our stand of not supplying POM medicines on bulk orders and that they share our anxiety that patient drugs are at the disposal of wardens or matrons who are untrained as far as medicines are concerned. It has long been a source of wonder to me how one or two of the "matrons" of institutions I have visited were chosen, since their confidences to me regarding medicines and treatments have occasionally driven me to immediate contact with the GP. And in these cases, prescriptions for individual patients *had* been written.

Not so long ago I found one home "sister" writing all the scripts for the inmates, to be signed on the pad by an obliging physician. The concept of a caring individual treatment takes some maintaining, but I think our action will be accepted as proper to such a vision, without any real resistance from prescribers — who can hardly advocate their convenience against their responsibility. I wish you a Happy New Year. ■

Unichem own-brand TV adverts to feature all-in-one nappy

Unichem's first television commercial highlighting own brand products features the new elasticated all-in-one nappy in a £¼ million campaign and highlights their belief that: "own label should be the company spearhead — not just something we do."

The five week campaign will commence at the end of February and continue through March and follows the highly successful £150,000 consumer campaign in Spring and Autumn 1981 on own-brand products. This featured extensively in women's magazines and baby annuals — members sales of own brands were up 55 per cent on 1980. In fact one advertisement in a magazine distributed through grocers carried the copy line: "Only available from your chemist".

The 30-second television advertisement will be screened at peak viewing times and between 12 noon and 3pm so as to reach a high percentage of mothers with young children. It is estimated that the film will be shown approximately 50 times in each region and that by the end of the campaign, 75 per cent of mothers in England, Scotland and Wales will have had the opportunity to see it six times.

The commercials will feature baby Samantha and a cuddly panda who will both appear on all 1982 baby product advertising, window posters and shelf wobblers. The slogan for the baby range is "One Big Thrifty Family" and Samantha and panda will convey the message that Unichem elasticated all-in-ones are extra absorbing, dry-keeping, snug and good value for money — in fact: "well worth crawling for."

The all-in-one elasticated nappies are packed in 12s and available as baby, £1.29 (£12.90 per dozen) and toddler, £1.66 (£16.60 per dozen).

Additions to the own-label range include a 35g antiseptic cream (£0.42) and diarrhoea mixture (£0.65).

A sales distribution drive will take place throughout January and February to ensure all members have the opportunity to stock the new elasticated all-in-ones and other Unichem baby products before the start of the advertising. The company are confident they can achieve fairly close to 100 per cent distribution — incentives include either a clock radio, travel alarm or binoculars.

Window posters and point-of-sale material will support the campaign and full page colour advertisements will also

appear in baby annuals during March.

"Members received our 1981 advertising extremely enthusiastically and sales on the baby range for the year will have topped £1½ million," says Bill Hart, assistant marketing director. "As far as we know, we are the only pharmaceutical wholesaler ever to advertise its own products on television so this venture is extremely important."

"After our last spate of consumer advertising, customers have asked for Unichem products by name, so it is hoped that television advertising will attract more and more people into their local independent chemist and generate sales on all products."

There are now 14 products in the baby range — four were launched last year — and more items will be introduced in 1982.

January offers

A wide range of products will be on offer to Unichem members during January 11 - 30. A selection of these will appear on two window posters which will be available to members ordering on this offer together with price cards and shelf barkers.

The offers are:

Aspro clear, Andrex, Aqua Ban, Alberto Balsam conditioner 100ml, Alberto Balsam dandruff shampoo 125ml, Anadin, Brylcreem, Brylcreem anti-dandruff, Band-aid washproof, Band-aid clear, Brut 33 creme shave (50per cent extra), Brut 33 deodorant stick, Crest toothpaste, Dr White Panty Pads (15 for 10 pack), Dettol 500ml, Ever Ready batteries (HP11, HP2, HP7, PP9, R14PP), Revlon Flex conditioner (+ free 125ml banded shampoo), Revlon Flex shampoo (+ free 125ml banded conditioner), Grecian 2000 mens, Head & Shoulders, Halls Mentholiptus sticks, Harmony hairspray, Imperial Leather soap, Johnson baby powder 99g, Mentholatum Deep Heat, Norsca (antiperspirant, deodorant), Nice 'n Easy, Night Nurse, Palmolive shave cream, Radox herbal bath 300ml, Radox Showerfresh, Rapid shave, Steradent deep clean, Steradent tablets, Style, Signal toothpaste, Silkience conditioner, Seven Seas cod liver oil capsules, Slender powders, Slender bars and Vosene.

A selection of sundries and health foods will be on special offer.

Sundries available are:

Thermos Roughnecks, Addis Duet toothbrush, Unichem mattress cover, Denman hairbrushes, Unichem manicure

range and the Lady Jayne range.

Health foods on offer are: Health Crafts Gev-E-tabs 32 day, super A capsules, 100s, B Compleat capsules, 100s, high potency vitamin C 1g tablets, 30s, super E 250 iu capsules, 50s, Aminochel multi mineral tablets, 90s, GEB combination capsules, 28s, super GEB combination capsules, 24s. *Unichem Ltd, Crown House, Morden, Surrey.* ■

Aproten available

The manufacturers say there is no longer any shortage of Aproten biscuits as ample stocks are now available and being distributed immediately to all wholesalers. *Farmitalia Carlo Erba Ltd, Kingmaker House, Station Road, Barnet, Herts.* ■

Vestric specials

Vestric's special offers for January include Atrix skin conditioning lotion, in conjunction with an advertising campaign for the product. The other offers are on Atrix hand cream, Cream Silk conditioner, Gibbs SR toothpaste (large), Doctor White's 1 and Head and Shoulders twin pack. All products carry additional discounts to Vantage members. Promotions publication for January also includes details of photographic offers and Vantage own label products. *Vestric Ltd, West Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire.* ■

Prescription Specialities are on p23

ON TV NEXT WEEK

Ln London	WW Wales & West	We Westward
M Midlands	So South	B Border
Lc Lancs	NE North-east	G Grampian
Y Yorkshire	A Anglia	E Eireann
Sc Scotland	U Ulster	CI Channel Is
Anadin: All areas		
Askit powders: Sc, G		
Beechams powders: M, WW		
Beechams powders hot lemon: All areas		
Complan: Ln, Y, Sc, WW, So, NE, We, G		
Contac 400: All areas		
Cream Silk: All areas		
Kleenex family toilet tissues: All areas		
Mac lozenges: All areas		
Marmite: Ln, M, Lc, So, A, We, CI		
Moncler Derma: All areas		
Scholl thermal insoles: All except E, CI		
Setlers: All areas		
Sweetex: All areas		
Veno's adult formula: All areas		
Veno's original: All areas		
Vicks Sinex: All except E, CI		
TCP: All areas		
Wilkinson Sword shaving products: All areas		

COUNTERPOINTS

'Fresh, effective' Body Mist 2

Body Mist is being relaunched as new Body Mist 2, with an improved formula and a "clean, fresh effectiveness".

Beecham Toiletries say they are positioning the product to take advantage of the trend towards antiperspirants which concentrate more efficiently on underarm wetness and odour control. This trend has also led women to show more confidence in those specialist women's brands with a cleaner, more efficient appearance and with lighter, fresher, less "traditionally feminine" fragrances, they say. Recently this steady movement has been sharply accelerated by the introduction of the new body sprays.

In response to this sudden advance in demand, almost every aspect of the brand has been amended to maximise clean, fresh effectiveness. The concentration of the antiperspirant ingredient has been boosted and reinforced by a secondary deodorant ingredient. Each variant has been given a new name and colour — spring fresh (green), dawn fresh (blue), and wild fresh (pink). The shape of the 50ml roll-on has been retained but the old-style tin-plate aerosol can has been replaced — in both sizes — with the "trimline" can.

Body Mist 2 is being introduced by trial-offer prices flashed on-pack — 50ml roll-on at (£0.49), 100ml aerosol at (£0.59)



and 150ml aerosol at (£0.69). The brand will be advertised by a £1m television campaign employing a commercial with a theme based on the Police song "Don't stand so close to me". The campaign will be supported by a full-scale promotional programme, in-store. *Beecham Toiletries, Beecham House, Gt West Road, Brentford, Middx. TW8 9BD.* ■

Sister Lauras

From January 1 Dendron Ltd are no longer the distributors to the chemist trade of Sister Lauras food products. All inquiries regarding the range should be addressed to: *Douglas Laing & Jackson, 7 Claremont Terrace, Glasgow G37 XR.* ■

Belle Color boost

Belle Color is currently being offered in a Poundbeater promotion with the price held at £0.99. The company says that sales are increasing by 38 per cent and that the product holds number three position in the hair colourants market. They say the price of the product will be maintained for the foreseeable future. *Golden Ltd, Berkeley Square, London W1A 1BX.* ■

£1m national launch for soluble Phensic

Soluble Phensic is going national with the support of a £1 million television advertising campaign.

Beecham test-launched the product in Yorkshire, Lancashire and the North East in 1980. They say it has been successful and that it will further strengthen the original Phensic. Three packs are available — 6-tablets (£0.27), 12-tablets (£0.45), and 24-tablets (£0.74) all with the tablets in foil-wrapping. Each tablet contains aspirin 325mg and calcium

carbonate 97.5mg.

The advertising campaign breaks in March and will feature the claim that "Soluble Phensic speeds into the system in half the time that the traditional aspirin takes." A display tray holding 6 × 12-tablet packs and 6 × 24-tablet pack is available. *Beecham Proprietary Medicines, Beecham House, Great West Road, Brentford, Middx TW8 9BD.* ■



IT CHEERS THE CHESTIES



Benylin^{*} Expectorant

specially formulated for the chesty cough with congestion, and the most effective recommendation you can make.

Established, well-accepted by your customers and an important profit-winner for you. A product that really earns your recommendation.

PARKE-DAVIS

part of the Warner-Lambert Group
good products for you
and your customers.

Active Ingredients: Diphenhydramine Hydrochloride B P
Ammonium Chloride Ph Eur, Sodium Citrate Ph Eur, Menthol B P
Product Licence: 0018/5090

Parke Davis & Co., Pontypool, Gwent NP4 0YH.
Further information and data sheet available on request
^{*}Trade mark R82156

Softer Kleenex launched by £1 million TV campaign

Kimberley-Clark are aiming to increase their brand leadership of the facial tissue market in 1982 by means of a major product improvement and heavy support for all the Kleenex brands.

Kleenex for Men, regular and Super 3 are now being produced to a much finer quality — the tissues are softer, smoother and brighter (which means they look much whiter) and Kleenex for Men have also had their wet strength increased. The company says this is the biggest single improvement ever made in facial tissues and has meant a substantial change in the manufacturing process. It leaves the regular tissues (both white and coloured) a third softer and 50 per cent smoother than their nearest competitor; the mansize are 25 per cent softer and have 12 per cent more wet strength. The packs carry a "new improved" flash printed on the tear-off flap.

Biggest ever spend

The beginning of this year sees the biggest ever spend going behind Kleenex with a £1 million television campaign running nationally from mid-January to March. A lot of peak spots are being bought and the campaign will use two commercials. The main 40-second one emphasises that there are different tissues for different uses and, although it shows Kleenex packs with the improved flash, doesn't explain about the new tissues — this task is left to a 20-second supporting commercial.

To tie-in with the television advertising Kimberly-Clark are running an on-pack competition across the whole range in conjunction with British Airways. This involves matching faces to places — a theme which links with the TV commercial — and one entry is allowed per pack top. There are 30 prizes of £1,000 Sovereign holidays and for every four entries consumers will receive a £10 voucher for one Sovereign adult booking valid to March 1983.

The promotion is running on 11 million packs from February to April. During this period some of the major wholesalers will be price-promoting the tissues to their members. *Kimberly-Clark Ltd, Larkfield, Nr Maidstone, Kent.* ■



Handy size packs of vitamin E

The Food Supplement Co are introducing handy size packs of 600 iu vitamin E capsules designed for customers who wish to try concentrated strength vitamin E before committing themselves to the economy size.

The packs contain 20 strip-sealed capsules (£1.99) and are available in 10-pack counter display outers. A launch bonus of £1 off per case is being offered. *Health & Diet Food Co Ltd, Seymour House, 79 High Street, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1AW.* ■

Trial size wipes

A special trial size pack of Baby Wet Ones is on offer for a limited period from Sterling Health. The special pack (£0.45) containing 25 wipes will be sold in throughout January and February, and be available while stocks last. This is a one-off promotion designed to give mothers an opportunity to sample Baby Wet Ones. Special display material is also being provided. *Sterling Health, St Mark's Hill, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4PH.* ■

Eugene relaunch

Eugene hair thickener and 10 day set are being relaunched in larger size 23ml vials (£0.36 and £0.23 respectively). They are available in new display outers, each containing 24 vials. The 23ml size has been developed in line with the market

movement to larger sizes, and the vials have been redesigned to give the product stronger visual appeal, say the manufacturers. *Ashe Laboratories Ltd., Ashetree Works, Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7JZ.* ■

Dewitt to handle Cab Drivers

Ford, Jackson & Co (sales) Ltd have appointed DeWitt International Ltd to handle the manufacturing, marketing and distribution of Cab Drivers products with effect from January 4.

The products are to be advertised for the first time in a campaign being planned for the last half of January and February in both the trade and national media. *DeWitt International Ltd, Seymour Lane, London E10 7LX.* ■

Undercover agent

Aziza are introducing soft under eye cover creme (£0.99) which, they say, "blends naturally with the skin to conceal dark shadows, unwelcome lines and blemishes which often spoil carefully applied make-up." The texture, they say, has been "specially formulated" for easy finger-tip control to give instant natural-looking coverage. The product is uncartoned and comes in two shades, fair and medium, with a leaflet outlining the best methods of application. *Prince Matchabelli Ltd, PO Box 242, Consort House, Victoria Street, Windsor, Berks SL4 1EX.* ■

COUNTERPOINTS

Larger Colour Confidence range with conditioning lightener

Wella are relaunching their Colour Confidence range of permanent hair colourants and adding a lightener.

An improved range of 16 natural-looking shades (£2.15) offers longer lasting coverage with better conditioning, the company says, and there are six new shades.

The conditioning hair lightener is called Blondie (£2.45) and it is recommended for lightening natural hair or hair that has already been coloured. Each carton contains a bottle of blinding powder, a bottle of creme developer, a sachet of conditioning shampoo especially formulated for coloured or lightened hair (which can be purchased in a separate bottle) and a pair of gloves.

To help consumer selection Wella have introduced a complete merchandising system where each shade has its own corresponding hair tuft that locks onto the front of the display unit. There are two units — the larger one has its own leaflet pocket, but each size enables the range to be displayed either front-on or



sideways depending upon the number of facings that are desired. Consumer leaflets incorporating 40p-off vouchers on next purchase are available. The offer is open until September 30.

To support the relaunch, a campaign in leading national women's magazines will run throughout the year. *Wella GB Ltd, Wella Road, Basingstoke, Hants.* ■

11pc decline in toiletries market

The massive destocking of 1980 in the cosmetic and toiletry sectors continued into 1981 and resulted in a market decline of 11 per cent in real terms according to the findings of the latest *Silver Book* concerning the first quarter of 1981.

Sales of cosmetics and toiletries in the 12 month period to March 1981 amounted to £584½m at rsp, an increase of 6 per cent on the corresponding year-ago period (prices rising by 17½ per cent and demand falling by 11½ per cent).

Of the nine main product categories only one, the deodorants sector, recorded

any real term growth although the denture and hair preparations sectors suffered what is described as "marginal" declines.

Advertising expenditure on toiletries and cosmetics in the twelve months to March 1981 amounted to £61¼m, an increase of 34½ per cent on the year-ago figure.

The figure feels however that there are signs that retail and wholesale trade inventories have probably bottomed out but, it says, OTC sales will continue to be depressed whilst other factors, such as the faster increase in prices over disposable incomes continues. "*The Silver Book — a review of the cosmetic and toiletry preparations market. March 1981.*" *John Hogston Associates, 23 Golden Square Ltd, London W1.* ■

Vespre campaign

Johnson and Johnson are running another advertising campaign similar to that of Autumn 1981 to support Vespre press-on towels. The campaign will commence on February 6 and extend to the major monthly magazines. *Woman's Own* will carry 10p off coupons on February 6 and 13. First results of the recent "100 per cent free" promotion show Vespre's market share rose substantially to 15 per cent in October, compared with 8 per cent in the previous month, say the company. They plan to

continue brand support with further sampling. Both Vespre 20's and 10's will have new packaging from this month. *Johnson & Johnson Ltd, 260 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4EA.* ■

Lilia-White offer

During January, Lilia-White are offering a consumer promotion on Panty Pads. A special pack of 15 towels has been produced for Panty Pads with the cover marked "Ten towels plus five towels free." *Lilia-White Ltd, Alum Rock Road, Birmingham B8 3DZ.* ■

IT TACKLES THE TICKLIES



Benylin* Fortified Linctus

specialy formulated for the dry, tickly cough. The proven antitussive Benadryl* (diphenhydramine hydrochloride) is fortified by another proven cough suppressant, dextromethorphan hydrobromide. It's one of the most effective treatments for dry irritating coughs, and a rewarding recommendation for the pharmacy as well.

PARKE-DAVIS

part of the Warner-Lambert Group
good products for you
and your customers.

Active Ingredients: Diphenhydramine Hydrochloride B P
Dextromethorphan Hydrobromide B P; Sodium Citrate Ph Eur,
Menthol B P **Product Licence:** 0018/0111
Parke-Davis & Co., Pontypool, Gwent NP4 0YH

Further information and data sheet available on request.

*Trade mark R82156

The rise and fall of the swagman

The appearance of agency cosmetics and toiletries in unfranchised outlets, and their ready availability in cash-and-carries, has caused considerable friction between retailer and manufacturer over the past couple of years. Where does the stock come from — and are the manufacturers' denials of responsibility to be believed? In this article Canopus* reports from the inside on the past, present and doubtful future of "swag."

"Swag" is not a modern phenomenon: it has always been with us in one form or another. Until the past few years it has passed under a variety of pseudonyms, such as "fire damaged stock" or "discontinued lines." This effectively kept it underground, hidden, and ignored by the independent chemist.

By the summer of 1979, however, chemists were complaining. Agency perfumes were being sold openly in shops not holding the agency — and, of all places, from market barrows! Men were being prosecuted for fraud; several companies were up in arms about "passing off" or "parallel import" and others were most concerned about their lines being on open sale. What had happened?

The scene prior to 1979

Every major city seemed to have an auctioneer who occasionally advertised a sale of bankruptcy stock, etc. The scale was relatively minute — just the contents of a small shop or two. This was bought by a few enterprising men (chemists included) who sold it to the public under a variety of euphemisms.

Unsold Christmas coffrets were another matter. Many shops carefully stored them until the following Christmas, some were returned to the manufacturers for credit, whilst others were sold cheaply by chemists in their January sales.

Now and again a case of destocking by a manufacturer might occur. Mary Quant discontinued products appeared at half price or less in some department stores,

*Canopus is the pen-name of an entrepreneur who was until recently closely involved in swag distribution.

but such incidents were spasmodic. Most bulk lots of manufacturers' clearance lines were exported.

Wholesalers existed in almost every trade — but one of the exceptions was in the area of perfumes and cosmetics. Toiletries wholesalers had just a few speciality lines, such as Patons' nail varnish and perhaps the odd perfume from a clearance sale.

Genesis: 1978 to 1979

London and Manchester suddenly had wholesalers of clearance lines operating out of rather seedy converted houses. They specialised in perfumes and cosmetics. Their range was very limited and changed daily. Their stock was far from clean, but their prices were *low*. Perfumes that retailed at £2 or more were offered at only 20p in a shop-soiled box.

And testers. It is little wonder that Revlon testers were not available from that company. Lipstick bullits were sold for "£1 a dozen, all current shades!" Prices per thousand were literally only pennies each. The public fell over themselves to pay 35p for them!

Who was buying from these wholesalers? Initially, a few market traders, but also a few small chemist groups. These were the retailers that had the capital to pay cash and carry, and they were pharmacists enterprising enough to go out and look for profitable lines. None of these retailers dreamed of only a 50 per cent mark up for their perfumes. Retailing a Coty spray for only 50p? Nonsense. The public would have rejected them, thinking there was something wrong. No, if the suggested retail price was £3.50 they would be sold by the hundred for £2.99!

One or two of the more enterprising new warehouses established contacts abroad. British manufacturers would

quite happily export a container-load of cosmetics at a fraction of their British cost price. These could then be redirected back home. European contacts in Belgium, for example, could redirect a shipment of, say, Creme Puff, and the addition of carriage costs per unit would still allow them to be sold cash-and-carry for a fraction of the list price in Britain. American stock could be particularly cheap in the days when the pound was strong relative to the dollar.

In the area of re-imported lines, the Middle East was to play an important part where up-market lines were concerned. The Muslim dislike of alcohol compelled those agencies wishing to do business with Arab countries to reformulate their products. Initials began to appear on the backs of labels for expensive perfume sprays — initials such as "SDA," standing for "specially denatured alcohol."

Destocking schizophrenia

The name of the game was destocking in days of recession. Most agencies had reduced order books from their customers, but their production contracts, fixed up to two years ahead, held steady. The effect was surplus stocks sitting in their factories.

To clear the surplus was a priority for any company caught in this situation. If this was to be done by special offers to their retail outlets, how long would it have taken? "I'll have a dozen" from one shop, "Put me down for three sprays, a talc and a soap" from another. And there would have been the extra cost of both a rep to call and sell, plus the costs of the obligatory counter display, testers and advertising material.

The appearance of two or three entrepreneurs who could each take, say, a million units in one drop — and pay cash — was extremely tempting. So tempting that bargaining reduced cost prices to only a fraction of what they might otherwise have been. Similarly, when the bulk parcel was broken down into smaller parcels, only a penny or two was added to each unit, to tempt secondary purchasers to buy quickly. As warehouses developed showrooms and other expensive overheads, their margins had to rise, so that 20 per cent POR would not be unusual, but many margins were as low as 1, 2, or 3 per cent in the early days.

The manufacturers soon found that the existing retail agents would be antagonised when their products appeared on market barrows at below cost price. How could sales directors explain to their men in the field? How could these reps explain it in a disgruntled chemist's shop? The result was a complete disclaimer by

the companies in the early days. As swag became more commonplace the need to discuss it decreased.

So, on the one hand we had some companies with a policy to destock whenever necessary, coupled with a policy of denying that policy to their agents and retailers.

The bandwagon

Yes, some *pharmacists* were involved in the distribution of swag. As the warehouses grew, their clients started to ask "Have you got any ABC perfume, or any YZ sprays?" The swag merchants asked around. Mr X, MPS, had the agency, would he do them a favour, and order an extra six packs of the sprays for them? After all, they would collect it from him, and pay immediately, in cash. They offered 5 per cent at first, but with more small punters entering the supply market, this fell to 2½ per cent. That doesn't tempt you? But six parcels at a cost of £200 each at 2½ per cent yeilds an immediate net profit of £30 — all for the cost of two telephone calls! And to this can be added the value of the two months' credit before paying the manufacturer.

The manufacturer started to realise that some small accounts had multiplied their turnover many times in just a few months. Whereas most companies took the view that this increased their own profits, which it did, some decided to be "out of stock" to those customers whenever unusual quantities were ordered. Many of the so-called exclusive houses fell into this latter category. So, while destocking themselves, ("clearing dead stocks") these companies blocked small-scale factoring.

Some of the pharmacists involved in factoring had more than one shop. If they were blocked through one account, they were able to switch their bulk orders to another shop, and continue unabated.

Made for the market

As early as 1978 one or two of the first-generation swagmen were looking to the future. Swag supplies were spasmodic. Brand name mascaras might be available one day, but unobtainable for months to come. So why not market their own?

Manufacturers of perfumes, nail varnish, lipsticks, blushers, eye cosmetics, skin care products, etc, found a new ready market selling their unlabelled produce to a few entrepreneurs. Brand names and trade marks were registered. Printers were contacted. "Constance Carroll," "Gallery," "Liberty," etc, were some of the new names to appear on the labels of cosmetics.

At first, of course, it took time to establish these lines, so they were ridiculously cheap to encourage retailers to buy them and take a remarkable margin of profit. There was no advertising, no expensive packaging, no

reps travelling round, no extended credit problems, and no head office overheads. Nor did any profits have to be transferred abroad to a parent company.

The effect was that by 1979 extremely good products were being marketed at phenomenally low prices. By 1980 fashion was being followed, and by 1981 these lines were extremely big business. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that some market areas were actually established by these cheap but good products being readily available — glitter nail polish and body glitter are cases in point.

1980 — the year of the profits

Swag was no longer rubbish. Gradually the quality of the merchandise was rising — but so were the prices. The extraordinary mark-ups possible with this type of goods attracted many other intermediaries into the game. Overnight the second-generation of wholesalers appeared. All over the country new units sprang up, or toiletries warehouses expanded into this market.

The effect on the first-generation swagmen was quite dramatic — they moved into up-market new premises! They developed new beauty-conscious showrooms, installed coffee machines, carpets, systems — and diversified. To diversify they set up separate departments to handle mail order businesses, or for party-plan/factory sales, and continued to register their own trade marks.

Imported "export lines" were now becoming more prolific. Many manufacturers came to terms with the situation. Small suppliers to the trade were increasing rapidly; so were small purchasers. Every street market now had a stall selling beauty products. Drug stores and discount shops were jumping on the bandwagon everywhere. Even Argos and Woolworths were reputed to be clients.

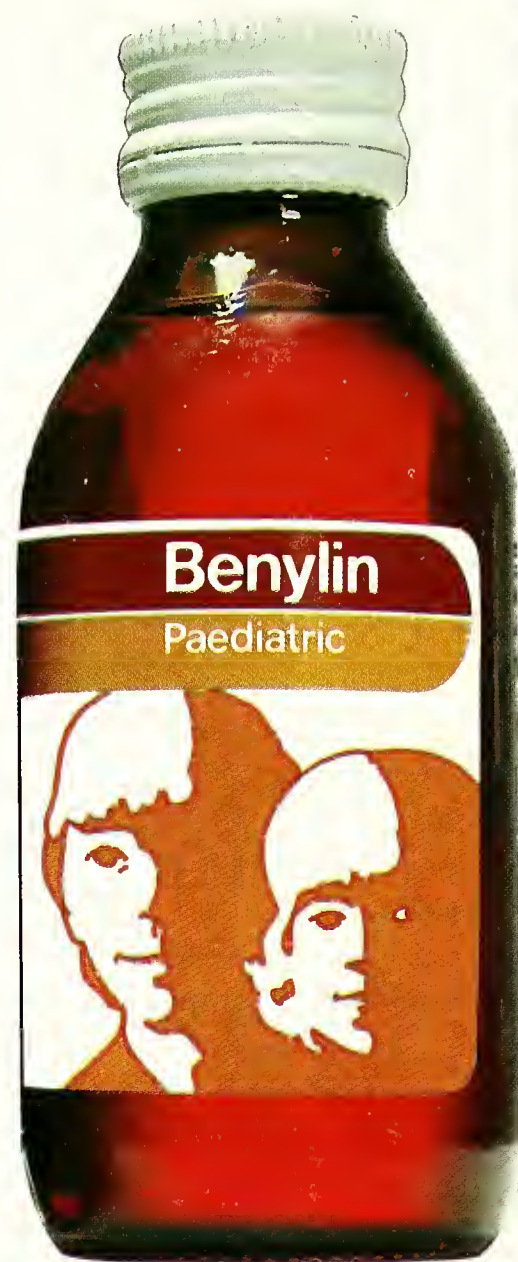
1980 was probably the year of great profits. Profit for the lucky few who were already in the market, profit for the manufacturers catering for the trade, and profit for those selling up and getting out, for the market was starting to fragment.

'Legacy departments'

Perhaps it was a sign of the times, but some companies began to establish specific departments to cater for the swag market. Whereas manufacturers had previously disposed of excess stock on an ad hoc basis through their sales departments, now the system was formalised. Scale, and the search for profits, had led to the creation of a section specifically authorised to offer bargains.

The continuance of the destocking process was, in one or two cases, ensured by the targets sent to Britain by

IT COMFORTS THE KIDDIES



Benylin^{*} Paediatric

pecially formulated to treat coughs in children up to 12 years, with a pleasant and very acceptable raspberry flavour.

Most parents know how well Benylin Paediatric does its job, and when you recommend it you'll be giving them a good night's rest as well as the child.

PARKE-DAVIS

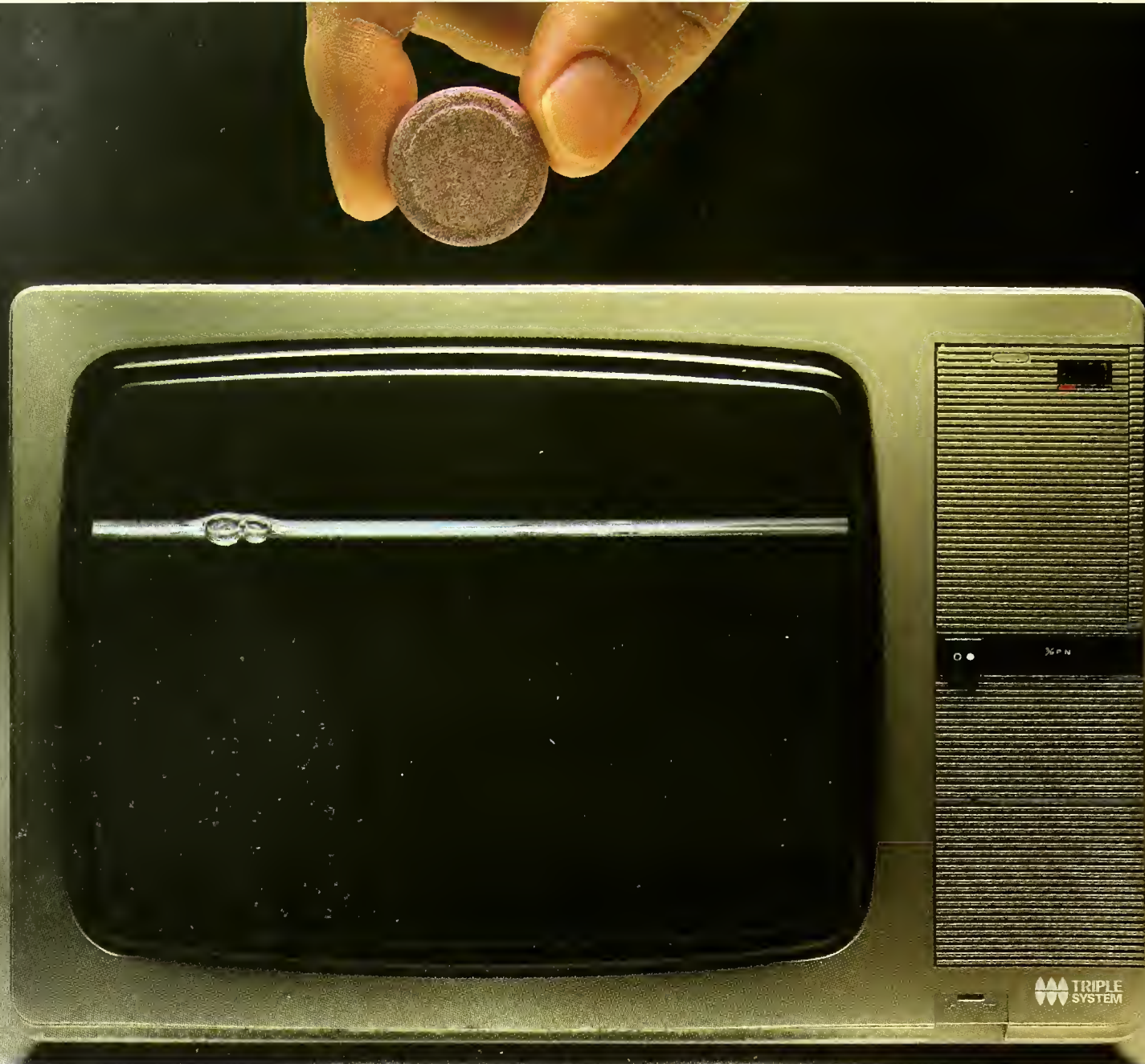
part of the Warner-Lambert Group
good products for you
and your customers.

Active Ingredients: Diphenhydramine Hydrochloride B P
Sodium Citrate Ph.Eur. Menthol B P **Product Licence:** 0018/0067
Parke-Davis & Co. Pontypool, Gwent NP4 0YH

Further information and data sheet available on request

^{*}Trade mark R82156

Continued on p 18



On January 4th waking up the Vitamin C

We've found a novel way of awakening your customers from their post-Christmas slumbers.

It goes by the name of 'The Fizz'. It's a 30-second TV commercial

for Redoxon Vitamin C that features an unforgettable host of fizzy characters and a fizzy jingle that's very, very catchy.

'The Fizz' will run nationally



n, we're
o
market.



Redoxon.
Vitamin C with a fizz.

from January 4th, backed up by some
equally eye-catching press advertising
and point-of-sale material.

waiting with plenty of Redoxon on
your shelves.

So make sure you're ready and

After all, you don't want to be
caught napping.

The rise and fall of the swagman — *Concluded from p15*

How some manufacturers capitalise on the trend

foreign parent companies. These targets might be in unit sales per quarter, or might be in £ sterling. The effect was the same. A certain hysteria in the last days of a quarter in the sales managers' offices as depressing figures came in.

Managers started to telephone certain listed accounts. "Would you like 10,000 units at two-thirds usual cost price?" "I'll take them at half cost price!" "OK, as long as they are invoiced today!"

Previously, many surplus Christmas coffrets had been broken down and repackaged, or were exported, all of which involved further expense to the company: the modern legacy department (whatever name it uses) has the function of disposing of them as profitably as possible. One company also includes the customers' returns of faulty goods into their legacy department. These can then be picked over and any reasonably saleable items can be sold to the lower end of the swag market.

Indirect retailing attack

Everyone loves a bargain. In days of recession everyone looks for "deep cut prices". Indirect retailing seems to offer this — and is growing at an alarming rate. It is already a far greater attack on the traditional chemist perfume trade than swag ever was. It is already larger in scale than any of the party-plan (including "Avon") or pyramid-selling schemes of the past.

The system is at present operated by three or four giants, who literally cover the country. One is reputed to have over 2,000 "supervisors", each of whom supplies about ten or a dozen agents. The system is that agents take orders for a cut-price item from workmates, neighbours or family, and pass these to the supervisor, who then collates various orders, submits them, and receives the bulk drop of the goods. She then splits the delivery, and delivers them herself. Both of the ladies receives 10 per cent of the order value.

This system can be extremely profitable to the erstwhile swagman, for not only is he reaping the wholesaler's margin, with low-cost distribution, but he gains the retailer's as well! An example could be Coty L'Aimant flacon mist 50g sprays. The manufacturer's suggested retail price was £3.50 at one time. Agents offer it for £2.50; 10 per cent each for the agent and supervisor deducts 50p, leaving the wholesaler £2.

The same item may be offered on his shelves to cash-and-carry customers at 95p. A bulk purchase discount would allow a retailer to sell it with a 100 per cent mark up plus VAT for less than £2.

Unfortunately, human nature being what it is, the customers feel happier with having "saved a £1 through Elsie" — and Elsie has persuaded them to buy, when a shop would have been resisted!

It may well be pointed out that some well known agencies have always been willing to supply the supposedly "non-retail" outlets for this purpose, but only now is the scale of the operation becoming formidable. These manufacturers are continuing and expanding their sales of this type, under the self-justification that they are not damaging or subtracting from their retail accounts in any way.

1981 — the year of fragmentation

The Christmas of 1980 saw such a boom in sales of swag that far too many people decided to join in. Redundancy payments enabled some of the unemployed to set up in business, and the quick profits they saw were very tempting.

By the summer of 1981 Manchester alone had some ten so-called warehouses or wholesalers specialising in beauty products. Indeed, overnight the growth was such, nation-wide, that the *Trader* magazine developed a new trade classification for them. Many small-scale traders operated out of their garages. A conservative guesstimate suggested that by November 1981, the Greater Manchester area had some 4,000 traders of all types selling swag.

The effect of this was to squeeze margins at the retail level due to the increased competition, and rapidly to increase wholesale prices. If one warehouse scored a coup, obtaining a substantial parcel of goods, they were

"During the Summer of 1981 well known expensive perfumes became freely available"

eager to sell part immediately to ease their cash flow. Having added their margin, a smaller parcel passed to a second warehouse, and so on ad infinitum. Each little warehouse, therefore, had virtually the same goods in stock, but the price differentials indicated how many hands (and mark-ups) had been in contact with them.

The Summer of 1981 also saw the expensive perfumes coming in from the cold. Well known expensive perfumes had certainly appeared on market barrows before. Local retailers had complained to the agency and then discovered that the market boys' retail price was well above

that in the retailer's own shop! Worth sprays at an srp of £3.50 were sold for £4.50 or more and the public still thought they had a bargain!

Whereas special offers of the expensive perfumes were the usual items to appear occasionally in markets and in the swag wholesalers, by late Summer most agency goods were freely offered on their shelves — at a price. Even those two bastions of anti-swag, Chanel and Estee

"The first generation warehouses are planning to go 'legitimate,' with representatives, credit, testers — and own brands"

Lauder, were on open display in one warehouse. In the four years of the swag boom the only house noted for its products not appearing in vast abnormal quantities on the open market is Yardley.

Late 1981 has also seen the first generation of warehouses planning to go fully "legitimate", with reps, deliveries, credit facilities, testers, counter stands, etc. It has also seen them laying plans to market their own brands in the "traditional" manner. Using the reps they expect to sell parcels on counter display units complete with testers, to the chemist trade, on normal credit terms.

1982 — the year of retail recession?

Swag will continue unabated. Genuine swag will probably increase in quantity as manufacturers feel the pinch, and retailers continue to destock during the first half of the year.

But what of its price? The halcyon days of cheap swag are past. No doubt many of the third generation of warehouses will disappear as cash flow, lack of sales, and lack of capital, combine with reduced profit to force them out. But others will jump onto the bandwagon. Wholesale cost prices will stay high.

As the swagmen are forced to go out to find their customers, two areas of further development can be forecast. First, the expansion of indirect retailing systems (the reappearance of the party-plan method?). Second, the establishment of a legitimate (expensive) image while still selling in the low-priced cash-and-carry market by the major warehouses. This new image will introduce many chemists to the new market for the first time.

One range of made-for-the-market replica perfumes was already being sold into chemists as 1981 closed. With cash-and-carry prices as low as 40p per spray for quantity, and sold by market traders at 99p to £1.25, they are available to chemists with all the traditional inducements of credit facilities, etc, for

the chemist to sell at £1.95 each — with a cost price of £1.15. This yields a far lower POR than most traders would consider.

Similarly, to go legitimate the actual acquisition of famous brand names is a possibility. It may well be that erstwhile swagmen buy the names and trade marks, or are able to use them under licence. Some very well known brand names that have been discontinued in the UK for some while by their original owners are currently available on (apparently) new stock with new manufacturers' names on the cartons.

Imports from EEC countries cannot really be curtailed. But the importing swagmen are extending their arms. No longer are America and the Middle East the end of the line. They literally scour the globe looking for substantial parcels of branded perfumes or cosmetics. It is interesting to hear the romantic names that crop up in their conversation — Singapore, Manila, Durban, Montevideo or Sydney. (This should not lead to any confusion about the introduction of the make-up kits from Taiwan, posing under several names, and contained illegal

“The swagmen are extending their arms around the world”

quantities of heavy metal toxins. It is interesting to note that very few of the beauty product swagmen handled these items — most of them went to warehouses in other trading areas as new lines, for the grocery, hardware, stationery, or general trader markets.)

1982 will possibly see most manufacturers, even those that have resisted the competitive market, entering with a series of special offers — “one-third off”, “20 per cent more”, or a pair of gloves with each purchase. These will be snapped up by the swagmen — and will induce yet more people into the trade.

As the retail recession really bites in the first months of the year, the energetic pharmacist willing to go out into the world of trading will find his 100 and 200 per cent margins on perfumes squeezed from both directions — by the wholesaler and the customer. The effect will be for swag lines from other marketing areas to appear in some chemists. For Christmas 1981, teddy bears, costing £1.30 but labelled by their manufacturer at £24.50, were being sold in one small multiple group for £8.95. Will ladies' knickers appear in the ST section, children's toys in the baby sections, or umbrellas alongside the Rain Mates? The possibilities for diversification in the so-called swag market, at swag profit margins are endless.

Resumé

□ Customers' attitudes *have* changed over the past two or three years. “There must be something wrong with it, at that price” has changed to “I might just treat myself”.

□ Swagmen are poised to break into the “legitimate” market so far as chemists are concerned. “If they deliver it, and invoice me it must be alright, mustn't it?” Never mind the cost if they went out to buy it cash-and-carry.

□ Manufacturers of agency cosmetics and perfumes will be under pressure not only from the recession, but from the new wave of extremely low-priced products.

□ Imports from EEC countries will continue, and will affect prices here. The effect of imported Bobedas has already induced Beecham to reduce their prices in the UK (but swag prices fell simultaneously: at the time of writing [mid-December] it is offered at £3.50 for the 900ml size, against a list cost price of £5.20). Will other prices follow suit? Bergasol oil and lotion were extensively wholesaled in 1981 at about £20 per dozen compared with a list price of £35-plus per dozen.

□ Some chemists are compelled to have substantial sums of capital tied up by the agency companies demanding that they stock the entire range, much of it being poor sellers. These chemists may well choose to opt out and reject the entire agency, preferring to buy only the lines that sell from the warehouses.

This will liberate their capital, and be profitable in the very short term. But the consequences of this action, if it occurred on any scale, would be several. First the agencies might consent to their retailers only stocking the required lines, but more likely, the agencies would turn away from chemists, looking to the stores and specialist shops for their sales. Second, the lack of ranges in chemists would send customers to the specialist shops who “bothered” with a particular line that was madame's favourite.

□ There is little doubt that the days of only one or two shops handling the beauty market in a town, are disappearing rapidly. Grocers, newsagents, general stores, even garden centres and garages

“If chemists opt out the agency houses may turn to the stores and specialist shops who are prepared to ‘bother’ with their entire ranges”

are taking on this highly profitable (to them) business. Some of these new outlets are satisfied with a normal POR of 10 per cent. For them to find a new growth area with 50 per cent POR is extremely tempting. Shortly they will have to compete — not with chemists — but with one another and their margins will be 30 per cent . . . then 20 per cent . . . then 10 per cent . . . and they will *still* be happy with their market share!

Will 1982 go down in history as the year chemists lost the beauty market? It will go down as the year when swag went legitimate. But will chemists still be satisfied with their (“I feel dreadfully embarrassed at the thought of more than a 50 per cent mark up!”) usual profits?

Conclusions

“Swag” is: items for sale on the open market that a minority group would attempt to restrict. Medicines are restricted in their sale in the interest of, and for the benefit of, the general public. The attempt to restrict swag is for the benefit of the vendors alone. The EEC rules, directives, laws, and court decisions, attempt to break this cartel and English law is following in the same direction. The Argos court case, and the signing of agreements about retail price fixing by several major agencies, etc, are indicative of the way things are going.

This, combined with the opening up of the market for beauty products, suggests we have come to the end of an era. No longer are these products the sole preserve of a few specialist shops, chemists, and department stores.

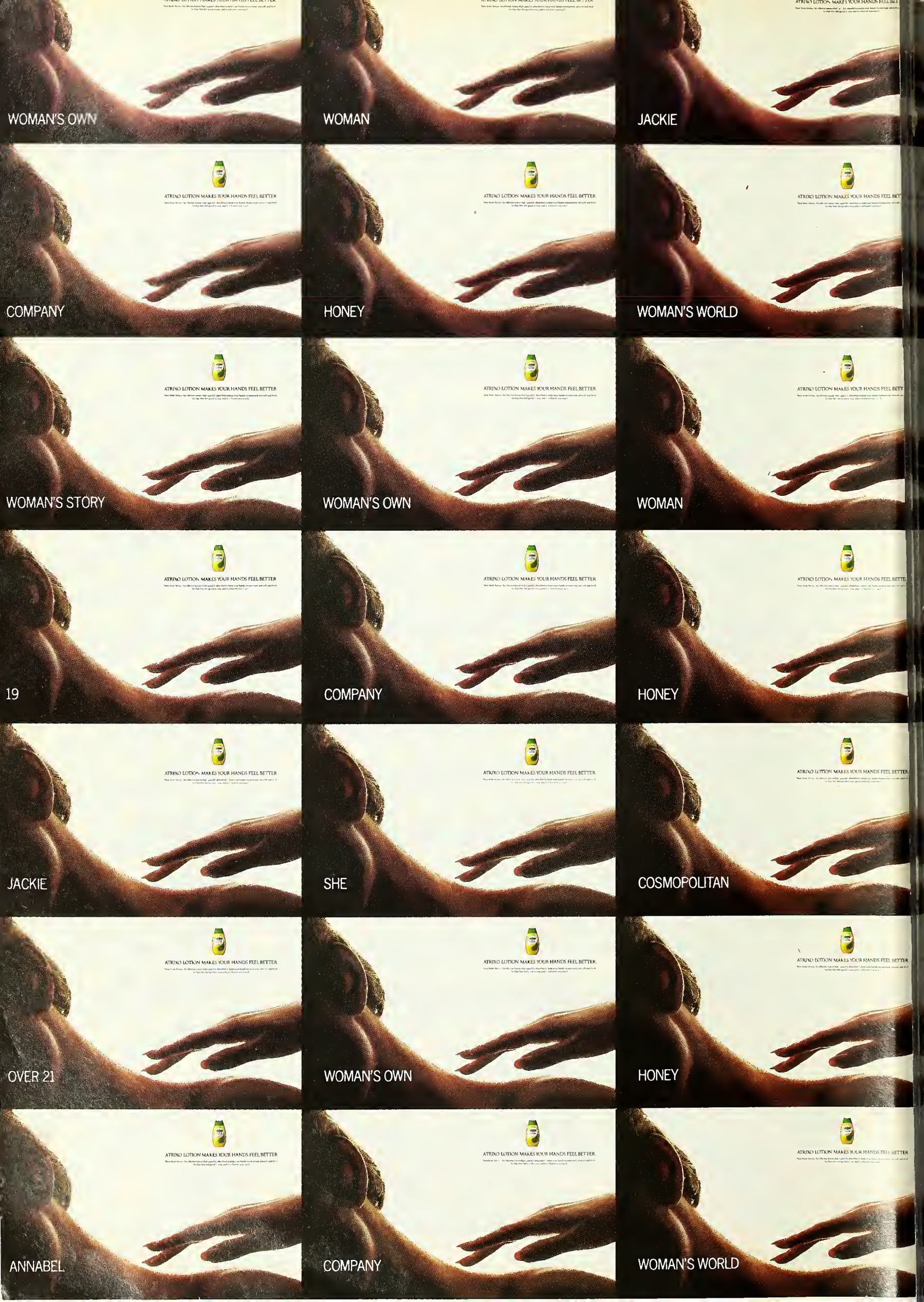
But will these specialist shops survive? Of course they will! Market traders and discount shops may well appear on every corner, but they will only take selected lines, and then only spasmodically. We all love a bargain — but where do we go when we want help, advice, service, a special item, and above all, stock in good condition? Not to the market trader!

The era that is ending is that of monopolistic specialisation. The era that is emerging is one of challenge for the

The era of monopolistic specialisation is ending — the new era provides a challenge to chemists to take their share of what may prove to be an expanding market.”

chemist. The same challenge that appeared when toiletries went into the open market. Chemists still successfully sell toiletries — if they have adapted to the challenge. Incidentally, the emergence of toiletries from behind the chemist's counter has increased the market enormously. The same result may well occur with cosmetics and perfumes and aftershaves — are you ready and prepared to take your share of the expanding market?

Swag in the sense of cheap rubbish is dying in the Winter of 1981-82, because of market fragmentation. Competitiveness on genuine stock is appearing, but chemists need fear this far less than they should fear the great monolith now appearing — indirect retailing. ■



WOMAN'S OWN

WOMAN

JACKIE

COMPANY

HONEY

WOMAN'S WORLD

WOMAN'S STORY

WOMAN'S OWN

WOMAN

19

COMPANY

HONEY

JACKIE

SHE

COSMOPOLITAN

OVER 21

WOMAN'S OWN

HONEY

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WOMAN'S WORLD



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Counter prescribing — an evolutionary tale

"If counter prescribing has a future it depends on the wider education of our new generation of pharmacists and an improved selection of the drugs to which they can have access," declared Dr W. E. Court at the recent joint meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society and the British Society for the History of Pharmacy.

He began his talk on "A history of counter prescribing" by pointing out that many drugs used today were known to the Assyrians (c 2000 BC) and others to the Egyptians (c 1000 BC). These early people developed formulations which permitted the application of plant drugs to various parts of the anatomy.

The Assyrians used turpentine, hellebore, calamus, castor seed, peppermint, turmeric, storax, thyme, cannabis, crocus and linseed. The Egyptian drugs included, amongst others, acacia, wormwood, fig, poppy, colchicum, henbane, fennel, garlic, squill, honey, mustard and aloes.

As knowledge spread and adventurers travelled wider, new drugs emanating from the Middle East and India featured in Arabian medicine. The quest for knowledge of drug action rather than empirical usage was bedevilled by dubious theories. Galen's hypothesis dominated medical thought for over 1500 years despite its many shortcomings. Harvey's prescription for John Aubrey in 1653 reveals the Galenic influence. Rhubarb and syrup of roses countered excess yellow bile; senna and hellebore tackled the black bile and agaric the phlegm. Aniseed and fennel were added as carminatives and flavouring.

The Doctrine of Signatures also played a misleading role in the explanation of medical action. This concept, found in tribal medicine in many parts of the world, was firmly enunciated by Paracelsus (c 1500) and held sway until the 17th century, but it can still be found in contemporary herbal books in our city bookshops.

Astrology has from Assyrian times been associated with diseases and medicines culminating in Nicholas Culpeper's association of plants, planets and disease. His herbal is still available.

Nevertheless, a sound empirical medicine developed and medical practice recognised drugs having definable effects eg purgatives, cosmetics, diuretics, diaphoretics and carminatives. In Britain, however, physicians were few in number and tended to treat wealthy upper classes

whilst the apothecaries cared for the common people. Counter prescribing had arrived as well as friction between physician and apothecary.

Medicine advanced rapidly in the 16th and 17th centuries due (a) to the arrival of the printing press in 1476; (b) the efforts of explorers who brought drugs from the New World; (c) growth of scientific botany, and (d) increasing knowledge of diseases.

In the fourth edition of the *Pharmacopoeia Londonensis*, 1721, there was a serious attempt to omit many of the superstitious and revolting remedies which had been in use for more than a century. Yet the standing of the apothecary was not good; as Adam Smith stated in 1790: "Apothecaries are the physicians of the poor at all times and of the rich when the danger is not very great".

Although the 1815 Apothecaries Act established the rightful position of the chemists and druggists as preparers and dispensers of medicine, they were prevented from diagnosing symptoms and prescribing remedies. As a result of the formation of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1841 the profession of pharmacy became more clearly identified and apothecaries were forced to align themselves to either medicine or pharmacy.

To aid the counter prescribing pharmacist many reference books were available including Gray's Supplement to the *Pharmacopoeia* (1818); *Squires Companion to the British Pharmacopoeia* (1864 and 19 editions to 1925); *Diseases and Remedies*, a concise survey of the most modern methods of medicine, published by the *Chemist & Druggist* (first edition 1898, fifth edition 1916).

The *Chemist & Druggist* from 1859 onwards provided good sources of information under the headings: -Practical notes and formulae, Miscellaneous inquiries and dispensing notes. Likewise, the Society's journal offered advice and example. The legal position of counter prescribing was clear. There must be no diagnosis by examination of the patient.

Poisoning, accidental and deliberate, was a problem of the 19th century which led to the Arsenic Act 1851. Further poisons control was introduced in the Pharmacy Act 1868.

Prior to the National Health Insurance Act 1911, the public obtained medicines either as patent medicines, chemists' nostrums or individually-

prepared counter prescriptions. The Act recognised pharmacists had the skill and knowledge produced by experience and adequate education, not only to safeguard the distribution of poisons, but also to dispense the nation's medicines.

Particularly in working class areas, the volume of prescription dispensing increased rapidly, but counter prescribing continued to be important and remained so between the two world wars. However, there were changes brought about by new legislation in Poisons Lists and the Dangerous Drugs Acts and amendments placed more restrictions on the pharmacist.

The expansion of the National Health Service resulted in fewer private prescriptions and less counter prescribing. ■

BOOKS

The Victorian Chemist & Druggist

W.A. Jackson, Shire Publications Ltd, Church Street, Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 9AJ. 32pp. £0.95 (paper covers).

Although written for the general public (or rather those who collect) pharmacists will enjoy thumbing through this little booklet.

Mr Jackson begins with a very brief note on the historical background to the Victorian chemist's shop and then describes its contents. He deals with storage containers and dispensing equipment, counter lines, chemists' sundries and doctors' instruments. Each page carries an illustration and therefore the amount of text is restricted; nevertheless the author has managed to compress into the available space a surprising amount of information. Yet one is left with a feeling that some areas should have received more attention. Perhaps it is because the present day antiques collector is more likely to "meet" equipment rather than counter lines that the latter are given but a few inches of text — an approach which does not give a balanced reflection of the activities of the Victorian chemist and druggist.

Another comment that should be made concerns the illustrations, some of which lack the clarity so essential for those using the book for reference purposes.

The final page in the book will be noted by most readers; it is a short list of places to visit in the provinces (and one in Jersey). The omission of London and Edinburgh is intriguing. In spite of all this the book is a bargain. ■

Switch to U100 insulin should begin next year

The Department of Health has given its support to the proposed introduction of 100 units per ml insulin (U100) and has issued information on the expected timing.

The Department stresses that standardisation will be up to the medical profession and that there can be no question of the DHSS restricting the clinical freedom of doctors to prescribe whatever strength of insulin they think best. However, they think that if manufacturers cease marketing particular strengths, then standardisation may ultimately be achieved.

Little difficulty is envisaged over the availability of U100. Two Scandinavian firms are expected shortly to have product licences and the other major manufacturers have applied or are about to apply for them. Given at least nine months notice they anticipate few problems over providing enough U100 and phasing out stocks of other strengths.

The production of suitable glass re-usable diabetic syringes is more of a problem as no British Standard exists as yet. A BSI committee has issued a draft standard and if all goes well a final draft should be now available and could be published 6-9 months later. Manufacturers are reluctant to set up production until an agreed standard is published and they estimate it will take at least nine months from the start of production to make and deliver adequate stocks for a smooth changeover.

The British Diabetic Association steering committee hopes it will soon be able to fix a definite date for the start of the widespread introduction of U100. It is intended to give at least 9 months notice to all interested parties. While the Department will issue some guidance, the BDA will be responsible for all the publicity that will be necessary.

The BDA will recommend that all new insulin-requiring diabetics will be prescribed U100 from the start date and that existing diabetics will be switched to U100 in a phased period of 1-2 years spread over at least two financial years with a reasonable evenness in the numbers changed each month. Changeovers will usually be done by the clinic and the BDA will encourage those GPs who look after their own diabetics to refer them to a clinic for the changeover. It is anticipated that the new U100 insulin syringes will be prescribable under the Drug Tariff arrangements from the start.

Supplying all insulin-requiring

diabetics with two new syringes might, in England, cost about £2m. The main burden is likely to fall on the new district health authorities but if spread over two financial years should mean about £5000 per year per district. The DHSS has said there is no question of extra money for the change being provided centrally. ■

Driclor solution

Manufacturer Stiefel Laboratories (UK) Ltd, Wellcroft Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4AQ

Description Clear, colourless, alcoholic solution containing 20 per cent aluminium chloride hexahydrate

Indications Hyperhidrosis of the axillae, hands and feet

Method of use Last thing at night carefully dry the affected areas and apply the product. Wash off in the morning. Do not re-apply during the day. Initially it should be applied every night until perspiration stops during the day. Applications may then be reduced to twice a week and if sweating is then still absent to once a week or less

Precautions Should not be applied to broken or irritated skin and the skin should be perfectly dry before use. At least one hour should elapse after bathing before applying the product and bathing should be avoided immediately after application. Shaving the armpits should be avoided for 24 hours before or after application. Driclor should not come in contact with the eyes

Side effects The reduction in perspiration may produce temporary irritation or redness. If this becomes excessive the treatment should be temporarily halted

Packs 60ml roll-on (£2.32 trade)

Issued January 4, 1982 ■

Amaranth removed from Ceporex

Ceporex tablets have been reformulated to remove amaranth, this agent being replaced by erythrosine and indigocarmine. Packs will carry the flash "amended colour" for a period of six months following the change.

Reformulated stock is expected to be phased into the market this month. *Glaxo Laboratories Ltd, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 0HE.* ■

Spectraban 4 and 15

Recent work in determining sunscreen protection factors has led Stiefel Laboratories to rename Spectraban as Spectraban 4 because they found it should allow four times the normal exposure to sunlight before burning. A pack of 150ml (£2.00 trade) will replace the 65ml bottle.

The company has brought out a new formulation, Spectraban 15, containing 2.5 per cent isoamyl-p-N, N-dimethyl-aminobenzoate and 5 per cent para-aminobenzoic acid in ethyl alcohol. As the name implies it should allow 15 times normal exposure before burning.

The lotion is pink (Spectraban 4 is blue) and also comes in 150ml bottles (£2.20 trade). Like Spectraban 4 it is prescribable on FP10s for patients who require protection from ultraviolet radiation in photodermatoses. They both offer protection against light in the 290-320 nanometre wavelengths and are pharmacy only medicines. *Stiefel Laboratories (UK) Ltd, Wellcroft Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4AQ.* ■

Alcon eyedrops

The pack size of Isopto carpine 4 per cent eye drops has been reduced from 15ml to 10ml. Prices are unchanged. Over the next few months the remaining Alcon 15ml packs will also be altered to 10ml. *Alcon Laboratories (UK) Ltd, Imperial Way, Watford, Herts.* ■

May & Baker lines

The following lines have been discontinued: 150 ml Largactil forte suspension, 50 × 2.5 mg Neulactil tablets, 5000 Soneryl tablets, and 500 Streptotriad tablets. *May & Baker Ltd, Dagenham, Essex RM10 7XS.* ■

Aldactide packs

The 40-pack of Aldactide 50 will be discontinued from January 1. *Searle Pharmaceuticals, Whalton Road, Morpeth, Northumberland.* ■

Diamox markings

Diamox Sustets are not now being printed "Lederle 4309." *Lederle Laboratories, Cyanamid of Great Britain Ltd, Fareham Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO13 0AS.* ■

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Awaken, Waking!

What an excellent exercise has been launched at Great Waking (*C&D* December 12) to pilory the unknown while backing the sitting tenant. It's a sad reflection on human nature that we always prefer the devil we know rather than the devil, or even the saint, we don't know.

There are, of course, other facts that aren't known: How much do the three doctors earn? How much profit do they make on their dispensing? What service do rural patients (the 8,000 — not just the 200 that were at the meeting) get in the way of pharmaceutical care and attention? Do the patients and people of Great Waking really feel that the three doctors are so poorly paid that their very existence depends on the dispensing that they have been doing? Do the patients at Great Waking realise all the perks doctors get and do they really feel that the added perk of dispensing, depriving all the patients in that area of a proper pharmaceutical service, is essential to the maintenance of a three-doctor practice?

The patients will, no doubt, be unaware of all the disadvantages that exist to them from receiving their prescriptions from "unqualified" sources and will also be unaware that doctors make far higher profits on dispensing than do pharmacists. They will be unaware that doctors acquire £3,500 pa increase in remuneration for long experience (25 years) and a GP with 14 years in general practice gets £2,000 pa. Can anyone believe that three doctors cannot exist on a practice of 8,000 patients? Most get a very comfortable living on fewer than 7,000 in a partnership of three.

Why the fuss?

So what's all this fuss about? How was it started and who in this day and age can walk away from their responsibilities simply because one of their many perks is suddenly taken over by someone who is more capable and qualified to do the job properly?

What is so depressing is that a member of Parliament should jump into the boiling pot and take sides without ascertaining the position of the various parties. I wonder if he has ascertained the salaries of the doctors concerned. How much will they lose by having a proper pharmaceutical service in Great Waking? They will not lose all their dispensing, of course, but the whole situation has obviously been well orchestrated to bring tears to the eyes at the heart-rending story of doctors losing their profitable perk — without it,

apparently, one doctor will have to go. I'm sure the great body of people of Great Waking must be far too intelligent to believe that sort of story; if they do believe it then they all must be truly brain washed.

John Davies
Secretary, Rural Pharmacists' Association, Wiveliscombe.

Rural care

Two seemingly unrelated news items last week have prompted this letter. The first was the reporting by the *Sunday Times* of the death of a patient due to unqualified drug administration and the second the proposed boycott of a new pharmacy in an area which can hardly be truly classified as rural.

In my situation I have to deal with both doctor dispensing and with dispensing for two old people's homes which are both administered by unqualified staff. I therefore have to stand on the sidelines and watch the following sequence of events. Somebody at the home decides that a patient needs a repeat supply of some drug which may have been originally prescribed in the distant past. A list of requirements is sent to the doctors' dispensary where the assistant transfers it to the appropriate FP10s without question and if she can, catches a doctor to sign them. The FP10s come into the pharmacy where we have to try to sort out the obvious mistakes and then hand the drugs over to the custody of an unqualified person to administer. Shortly afterwards it is common to get a 'phone call from the supervisor asking "Where is Mr X's prescription and why have you given Mrs Y the wrong tablets?"

Record-keeping by myself has shown up situations so alarming that I have been able to convince the doctors that something must be done and we are jointly working on a scheme to put matters right. It is only the fact that I can still talk to my doctors which keeps me a moderate on the Rural Pharmacists Association, although I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that moderation should be scrapped. Any patient-care scheme will involve the pharmacist in time and money not recoverable from any source and it is only because we are taught to care about patient welfare that we become involved in such schemes.

We are all familiar with the fact that the public expects the new school-leaver to put on years of knowledge and experience with her new overall on her first morning in the shop. At least she has the support of senior staff and a pharmacist. The unqualified receptionist/dispenser, often white-coated (cf the grocer in toothpaste commercials) and surrounded by a display

of dispensing packs of drugs in what is often called "The Pharmacy at Doctor's", must present to the public an image of super-efficiency.

Add to this the obligatory "power complex" and a high standard of bloody-mindedness and we have the makings of disaster. The only other requisite is the ability to convince the patient that the white coat confers the power of always being right, even if the wearer does not know what she is talking about and could not care less anyhow.

So back to the anti-pharmacy demonstration. Two questions spring to mind: first, was the demonstration rigged? Second, were there any demonstrators who were dispensing patients who were fully conversant with the facts?

The *Sunday Times* has shown that it cares about patient safety. It is therefore time that the RPA committee contacted the national Press and presented the facts. After all, it's not just the money, as a great deal of the extra script revenue would be swallowed up in providing a total patient care programme.

Squirrel Nutkin

WESTMINSTER REPORT

Drug expenditure

Mr Norman Fowler told Mr D. Knox that the percentage increase over the previous financial year in expenditure on drugs in England excluding hospital services was 20.6 per cent in 1980-81. This compared with 14.1 per cent in 1979-80 and 20 per cent in 1978-79. ■

Average cost

The average gross cost of prescriptions dispensed by pharmacists in England and Wales for September 1981 was £3.52, Dr Gerard Vaughan told the Commons. Of this £2.88 was the cost of ingredients. ■

Profits on scripts

Mr Peter Hardy estimated that on the basis of information supplied showing the number of cases where the actual cost of drug had been less than that of the prescription charge, over 12 million prescriptions would be dispensed over the next 12 months on which a profit would be made. Mr Norman Fowler replied that on average the charge made for a prescription amounted to half the actual cost of the drug itself. ■

Modest profits forecast for chemist survivors

A report on 99 of the leading retail and wholesale chemists over a three year period to October 1980 says "loss-makers are trebling in number."

Overall sales of these companies rose 15.8 per cent in 1978/79 and 16.2 per cent in 1979/80 but pre-tax profit growth is down to -2.0 and -3.9 per cent respectively.

The analysis split into retail and wholesale:

	Per cent 79/80 on 78/79	Per cent 78/79 on 77/78
Sales Growth		
Retail	+ 13.1	+ 15.8
Wholesale	+ 22.6	+ 15.7
Totals for report	+ 16.2	+ 15.8

Here wholesalers fare best, but a closer investigation of the figures reveals a clear deterioration in their business.

	Per cent 79/80 on 78/79	Per cent 78/79 on 77/78
Pre Tax profits growth		
Retail	+ 9.6	-2.2
Wholesale	-52.1	-0.9
Total for report	-3.9	-2.0

Growth in sales has meant a squeeze on margins and a severe drop in profits.

ICC Business Ratios say increasing competition from chain and variety stores, supermarkets and drug-stores has steadily eroded the chemists' share of the profitable toiletries and cosmetic market, while aggressively marketed mail order photographic processing labs have captured an increasing share of this custom.

Boots are cited as the one bright spark in this otherwise gloomy retailing picture, although adversely affected by the lack of growth in prescriptions over the last few years — profits growth has decelerated in the past two years.

The report says that with notable exceptions, most companies have suffered a decline in margins and return on capital. "Asset utilisation may be good but this can create problems: where margins are not maintained working capital comes under severe pressure. Here, reduced margins and a rise in asset utilisation of some wholesalers indicate dangerous trading conditions."

ICC forecasts low margins and as a result casualties among both large and small groups. For those who survive it says profit growth will be modest, although Boots will maintain a good position with its strong manufacturing interest and prospects from

pharmaceutical manufacturing to supplement overall growth.

An editor's note says ICC have not had access to up-to-date accounts of private limited companies over the last five months because of a civil service strike. *Retail & Wholesale Chemists, (2nd edition 1981-2) (£95 until January 1 1982, Hereafter £112), ICC Business Ratios, 23 City Road, London. ■*

Reshuffle at UG Closures

United Glass Closures & Plastics Ltd, manufactures of Clic Loc, have created two new business units. One unit will concentrate on products for the consumer and pharmaceutical industries, and the other on wines and beverages. Each will have their own production, sales, marketing and planning functions.

The consumer and pharmaceuticals unit will be headed by David Langley (operations director), with David Symons (factory manager, at Norwich), Don Greves (national sales manager) and Rhodi Grey (commercial operations manager). The unit's sales office will remain in Staines.

The company say the move is to strengthen their service to customers and to enable the company to concentrate future development in clearly defined market areas. ■

Briefly

■ **Smith & Nephew Pharmaceuticals Ltd** will be relocating their sales administration department with effect from January 4. All correspondence regarding orders, invoices and customer inquiries should be made to Mr W. Rogers, who had recently been appointed sales administration manager. *Bampton Road, Romford, Essex RM3 8SL (Telephone Ingrebourne (04023) 49333 Telex: 898058).*

■ **Sangers Agencies Ltd** are moving their head office from Hungerford. From January 1 correspondence should be sent to: *Unit 3, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 (telephone 01-889 9446).*

■ **Fennings Pharmaceuticals** have changed their phone number to Horsham (0403) 53427. Their address remains unchanged. ■

Cyprus convention for Unichem

Pharmacists can now book for Unichem's 1982 Pharmaceutical Convention which is being held in Cyprus from October 16. Delegates attending the week-long convention will have the option of extending their stay by a further week to relax in the sun.

Papers on a variety of subjects will be presented by prominent speakers and details of the full convention programme will be sent to all delegates as soon as arrangements are finalised. This will give all delegates the opportunity to plan in advance the sessions they wish to attend.

Flights are from both London and Manchester. Accommodation for singles, doubles or families will be either at the five-star Apollonia Beach Hotel or neighbouring Pegasus apartments — both overlooking the sea and three miles from the centre of Limassol.

Prices start from £293 for a two bedroomed apartment for one week (£349 for two weeks) and £380 for a room with mountain view at the hotel (£520 for two weeks). There are special rates for children under 12.

Enquiries can be made direct through Soler Touriste's conference department at Crown House, Morden, Surrey (telephone 01-543 0021) or Jayne Stephenson at Unichem (01-542 8522). ■

Monday, January 4

East Metropolitan Branch and West Ham and District Association of Pharmacists, Churchill Room, Wanstead Library, Spratt Hall Road, Wanstead E11, at 8pm. Dr G. McEnery on "Paediatric prescribing".

Wednesday, January 6

Crawley, Horsham and Reigate Branch, Pharmaceutical Society, Medical Centre, Redhill General Hospital, at 7.30 pm. Mr W. Burt on "Pain relief".
Sheffield Branch, Pharmaceutical Society, Lecture theatre, School of Physiotherapy, Jessop Hospital, at 8pm. Professor J. Crossland on "Drugs, charms and mighty magic".

Thursday, January 7

Hounslow Branch, Pharmaceutical Society, Lecture theatre, West Middlesex Hospital, Twickenham Road, Isleworth, at 7.45pm. Mr R. C. Strange, Roussel Laboratories Ltd, on "Good manufacturing practice and assurance between drug manufacturer and pharmacist". Film.
Huddersfield Branch, Pharmaceutical Society, Commercial Hotel, Church Street, Paddock, Huddersfield, at 8pm. Miss Donnelly on "Guide Dogs for the Blind".
Society of Cosmetic Scientists, at Royal Society of Arts, 6 John Adam Street, London WC2 at 6.30pm. Open meeting. Mr G. R. Murfitt on "Some applications of materials-testing machines in cosmetic and allied fields".

Advance Information

Chiltern Region Post Graduate Course, Wexham Park Hospital, Slough. January 6, 13, 20, 27 at 7.30 pm. Courses on cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, diabetes, anti-microbial therapy.

International Domestic Electrical Appliances Trade Fair, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, January 12-14.
Pharmaceutical Group, Royal Society of Health, 13 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7EN, on January 27 at 7pm. Mr Michael Van Straten on "Will alternative medicine stay alternative — or can it become complementary?" Admission charge of £2 for non-members. Registration to Conference Department at above address.

National Pharmaceutical Association, Mallinson House, 40 St Peter's Street, St Albans, Herts, on February 18. Seminar, commencing 10am, on "Tax considerations on business sale or retirement." Cost £63.25 (inc lunch). Details from Training Department at above address.

Cassio College, Watford. Seminars for independent retailers "Survival in the Eighties." To be held on Tuesdays at 7pm during February, March and April. Introductory meeting on January 26 at 7pm. Details from Mr Ken Farrow, Cassio College, Langley Road, Watford (telephone: Watford 40311 ext 47).

Review of 1981

For businesses generally the year 1981 was a particularly difficult one. It will be remembered by most as a year when unemployment rose to record heights, as one in which many companies had to close down because demand from the home market had disappeared, while overseas customers were also suffering from a likewise depression.

The pound, which in 1980 had been strong for most of the time (much to the annoyance of a vociferous section of the Confederation of British Industry and trade unions alike) plummeted soon after a new president was elected in the United States of America. Throughout the Summer the pound's depressed level put costs of imported raw materials up, giving another twist to inflation. Far from ending the year in single figures as forecast by the Government, the rate ended around 12 per cent and was still rising.

After the above gloomy introduction it is good to be able to record that prices of those commodities normally covered in the C&D Market News report week by week, did not rise dramatically and often hardly kept pace with inflation. There were a few exceptions, but mostly the rises were due to currency fluctuations rather than higher rates at origin or supply and demand imbalance.

Pharmaceutical chemicals

Vitamins, many of which are still not manufactured in the United Kingdom, were advanced in price by about 12½ per cent during October, although some were reduced in January and again in April. Prices of bismuth salts seemed to move each quarter: in March they went up by 10 per cent and again in June; however, in December the subcarbonate and subnitrate were reduced while the salicylate increased.

During the year a major manufacturer of aspirin decided to cease manufacture. The decision coincided with production cuts by other makers in Europe so there was a temporary gap in supplies around August-September. While imported aspirin earlier in the year was quoted at under £1 per kg for 10-ton lots, the price in September and onwards was around £1.30. The extra facilities for producing paracetamol in the UK and Europe of recent years have put supplies more in balance with demand, with a consequent stabilising of price.

Glucose monohydrate went up by £20 metric ton in June and by £10 in October while other forms moved up pro rata.

There were few shortages of chemicals during 1981, theobromine being one of them.

Crude drugs

While shortages among chemicals were few the situation among crude drugs was less satisfactory. How much one could attribute the shortages to lack of interest on the part of the buyers was not clear. What is certain is that dealers can no longer afford to carry stocks for any length of time on the off-chance that a buyer will eventually be forthcoming. For every month the stock is unsold it is reckoned to add 2 per cent to the cost. Hence the spot market is becoming increasingly short of supplies. At varying periods throughout the year the following were reported unavailable on the spot and for shipment: - dandelion and ipecacuanha roots, nux vomica, sarsaparilla, senega and tonquin beans.

On a percentage basis Canada balsam perhaps made the greatest gain, rising by 37 per cent for shipment — spot offers were unobtainable during the latter part of the year. Copaiba was short until about October while the price of Peru balsam moved up in the Summer but lost those gains by December.

Although trade was sluggish throughout, some spices became firmer. Cloves made a net gain of £1.70 kg and cochon ginger of £0.23.

Ipecacuanha was often unquoted and expensive when it became available. Supplies of liquorice root were erratic and for much of the time only forward offers were quoted — at one period China was said to have oversold and prices which had fallen from a peak of £745 metric ton in August to £540 in early November, began to creep up again.

Menthol often provided a talking point in the market with the Brazilian crystals attracting most of the attention. At the beginning of the year Brazil's prices received a boost when it was reported that the new crop would be a short one. A few weeks later manufacturers of synthetic menthol in the United States applied for the imposition of an anti-dumping duty on Chinese natural menthol imports. A small levy was imposed and an inquiry promised. The outcome of the inquiry has apparently not been made known.

Meanwhile Brazilian prices set the pattern but fairly large stocks held by dealers, and China well under Brazil's ideas of price, made for the unusual situation of spot material being offered at below the replacement quotations. In July, for example, Brazilian was £6.20 kg on the spot compared with £1.85 cif.

On the whole it was a poor year for

menthol sales but the more expensive *arvensis* peppermint oil fared better. Throughout the year natural camphor prices were firm with stocks in short supply.

Essential oils

Dealing in and prices of *arvensis* peppermint oil and menthol naturally tended to follow one another. Oil from China was always well under the cost of that from Brazil, yet a few years ago the position was the reverse. Elsewhere in essential oils it was also frequently possible to obtain spot parcels at a considerable discount from the shipment value.

Supplies of eucalyptus from the Mediterranean area were short with the result that Chinese oil had to fill the gap and prices ended the year about 25 per cent higher than 12 months earlier. As with crude drugs, many of the price movements in oils were caused by fluctuations in the international value of the pound against the US dollar since Chinese and South American are traded in US dollars.

Among expressed oils both sweet almond and olive ended the year dearer. Although the year had one extra public holiday — to celebrate "The wedding of the century" and the weather for once was appropriate for the occasion — businesswise the best that could be said of 1981 was: "It might have been worse" . . . Others might add: "not much."

	Dec 1980	Dec 1981
Chemicals		
	£ per kg	
Ascorbic acid	5.51	5.67
Aspirin	0.96	1.30
Bismuth	0.93	0.89
Codeine phos	460.00	460.50
Paracetamol	3.32	2.90
Phenobarbitone	8.12	9.80
Potassium citrate	1.11½	1.07
Sodium bicarb	0.14	0.15½
Crude drugs		
	+	+
Canada balsam	11.80	16.30
Cascara	1.20½	1.45½
Cloves	4.30	6.00
Ginger	0.41½	0.65
Ipecacuanha	17.20 +	33.00 +
Menthol, Brazilian	5.10	6.10
Menthol, Chinese	4.60	5.80
Kola nuts	0.48	0.40
Senna hp Alex	2.00	1.80
Essential oils		
Anise, China star	12.75	13.50
Citronella, Ceylon	3.40	2.40
Eucalyptus, Chinese	1.95	2.50
Lemongrass	4.50	4.75
Peppermint, Brazilian	4.50	6.20
Peppermint, Chinese	3.00	3.50
Peppermint, American	9.00	13.00
Sandalwood Mysore	47.50	55.00
Spearmint, Chinese	7.00	8.80
Spearmint, American	9.50	11.50

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and fittings £8,000. Stock at
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X3 — DERBYSHIRE — High Peak.
This nine-year-old large lock up unit
on rent at £950 per annum was pur-
pose built to serve a council estate of
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£84,500 on scripts averaging 1,650
per month. Scope for diversification
of counter trade. Fixtures and
fittings £4,000, offers invited for
goodwill, plus stock at valuation.

X4 — BIRKENHEAD — This old
established pharmacy turnover is
currently running at £120,000 plus
per annum, based on 2,100 scripts
per month. Property available for
sale at £12,000 or lease at £40 per
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X5 — LANARKSHIRE — Retirement
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X6 — TYNESIDE — Lock up
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Body Corporate of Frankfurt (M)-Hoechst, Germany,
in respect of an invention entitled
"Benzenesulphonyl-Ureas and process for their
manufacture"

— and —

IN THE MATTER of THE PATENTS ACTS 1949 and
1977

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that it is the intention of
HOECHST AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT and HOECHST
UK LIMITED whose registered office is situated at
Hoechst House Salisbury Road Hounslow Middlesex
to present a Petition under Section 23 of the Patents
Act 1949 (as modified by Schedule 1 paragraph 3(3)
of the Patents Act 1977) to the High Court of Justice,
Chancery Division, praying that the term of the said
Letters Patent may be extended.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that on Tuesday
27th April 1982 at 10.30 o'clock or so soon thereafter
as Counsel may be heard, the said HOECHST
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT and HOECHST UK
LIMITED intend to apply to the Court for a day to be
fixed before which the Petition shall not be in the
paper for hearing. Notices of opposition to the
Petition must be lodged not less than seven days
before the date above mentioned at the Chancery
Registrar's Office, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand,
London W.C.2.

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HOECHST AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT and HOECHST
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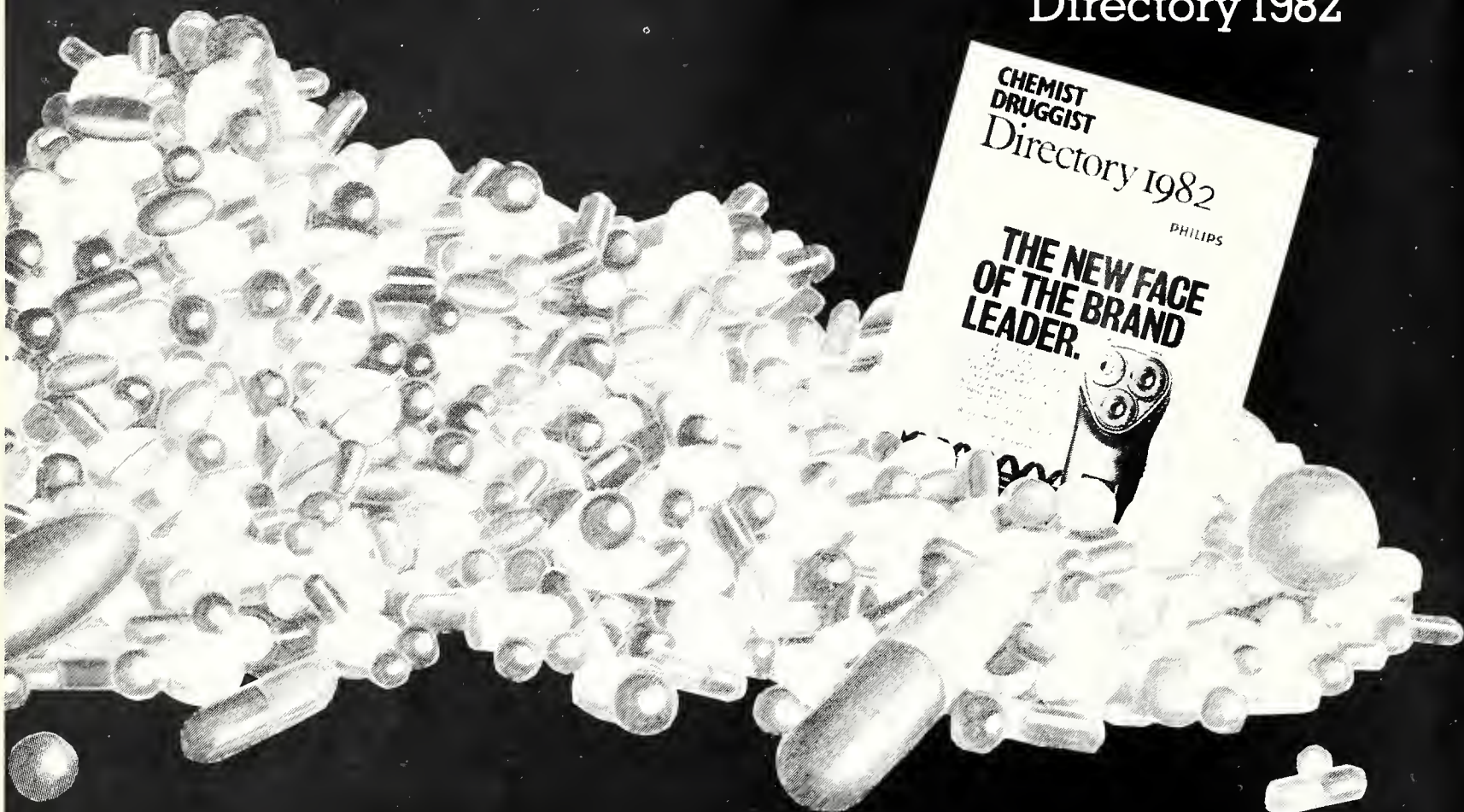
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